SEPTEMBER, 1935

THE COMMUNIST

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For Working Class Unity! For a Workers' and Farmers' Labor Party!
Speech at the Seventh World Congress of the C. I.
EARL BROWDER

The General Strike in Terre Haute — B. K. GEBERT

The Northwest General Lumber Strike — N. SPARKS

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For Working Class Unity! For a Workers' and Farmers' Labor Party!

By EARL BROWDER

(*Speech delivered August* 11, 1935, *at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International*)

COMRADES, the report of Comrade Dimitroff, and the resolution before us, give a clear and decisive answer to all the main question before the working class and toiling masses of the world.

I wish to concentrate my speech upon that point in the resolution which deals with a specific feature of the United States in relation to the forms in which the united working class front, and the broad anti-fascist people's front, can be realized. Paragraph 3 of Section II speaks of "the formation of lasting coalitions in the shape of 'Labor Parties' or 'Workers' and Farmers' Parties' (U.S.A.), etc." This point was further elaborated by Comrade Dimitroff.

Our Party has already laid the foundation for this policy in the decisions of our January Central Committee Plenum, and the work of the Party since then. This was not difficult, since there is a tradition among the American workers in this direction since 1920, since our Party had a big experience in a mass movement in this direction in the years 1922-24, and since the Sixth World Congress laid down a fundamental line on the question.

During the period of 1929-1934, there was no mass breakaway from the two chief capitalist parties which would give a base for practical work for a Labor Party. We therefore correctly declared against any attempts in this direction, and concentrated the Party upon its basic mass work, building united-front movements around specific issues: wages, hours, workers' rights, unemployment insurance, the League Against War and Fascism, etc., without having been able as yet to carry the united front on to the broad political field in the shape of a united-front party.

FACTORS FAVORING PRACTICAL WORK FOR A LABOR PARTY

But during 1934, and especially in the election period, it became clear that we must again review the whole question. Large masses, in hundreds of thousands and even millions, were breaking with

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old leaders and programs, were being disillusioned with the New Deal of Roosevelt, were seeking for some new path, were beginning to move. This expressed itself often in bizarre and utopian forms, such as the movement of the Technocrats, the Upton Sinclair EPIC movement, the Utopian Society, etc., which had numerous local imitators over the country; it was shown in the formation of the Progressive Party in Wisconsin, which was a split of the LaFollette movement away from the Republican Party; it was seen further in the new strength taken on by the old Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota. In the past year it has especially been seen in the spectacular rise of mass movements around the two outstanding semi-fascist demagogues, Senator Huey Long with his Share-the-Wealth slogan, and the radio priest, Father Coughlin, with his Union for Social Justice and a program of large-scale inflation, movements which claim their adherents in millions, and undoubtedly exercise broad mass influence.

In this situation, a new tactical program was undoubtedly called for. The Communist Party was growing, having doubled its vote in 1934, but this was in no relation to the mass movement away from the old parties. Further, our few efforts at united-front actions in the elections, had disclosed big possibilities (united workers' tickets in Southern Illinois), but at the same time a dangerous sectarianism in our own ranks (resistance to a joint election appeal by Socialist and Communist Parties, Trumbull County, Ohio, on the basis of an existing united front on current issues). We reopened the whole question of the Labor Party after the election and as a result came forward in January of this year with a broad campaign for the creation of a Labor Party, which we described in our first public appeal as:

> ". . . a fighting Labor Party, based upon the trade unions, the unemployed councils, the farmers' organizations, all the mass organizations of toilers, with a program of demands and of mass actions to improve the conditions of the masses at the expense of the rich, for measures such as the Farmers' Emergency Relief Bill, the Negro Rights Bill, and the Workers' Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill."

We set ourselves especially the task to rally a trade-union base for the movement toward such a Party.

MISCONCEPTIONS THAT HAD TO BE CORRECTED

Two serious weaknesses in our policy were already being revealed by life itself in our half year's work, which we can now see very clearly in the light of the resolution and Comrade Dimitroff's report. Both were yet the result of the pressure of sectarian in-

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hibitions and prejudices from which we are emerging. It was and remains clear that realizing a mass labor party depends in the first place upon our progress among the workers. We tended, however, to *limit* the conception of the Labor Party to its working class character, although this was in conflict with our simultaneous practical proposal to include farmers and all toilers; this served to obscure the necessary character of such a united-front party as a *lasting coalition* of workers, farmers and city middle classes. This unclarity made unnecessary difficulties in bringing our program to the farmers and city middle classes—a tremendously important question in the struggle against fascism. Second, and connected with the first, was the limited character of the program which we proposed for such a party, and our failure to face and answer the inevitable question from the masses as to our perspective for such a party when it should grow and attain political successes. Comrade Dimitroff's report has brilliantly illuminated these problems for us, and shown us the way to answer them.

The too narrow conception of the proposed united-front party was expressed in our categorical rejection of the name "Farmer-Labor", even though this has an established tradition especially in the agrarian Northwest. This was connected with past mistakes we made in 1925, when in summarizing the lessons of our participation in the Farmer-Labor Party movement of 1922-1924, we had been influenced by the Trotskyist anti-peasant theories, which denied the possibility of a lasting alliance of workers and farmers and came out in principle against the conception of a *coalition party* in which the Communist Party should participate. Our first practical steps to carry out our January resolution brought us into a conflict with this remnant of "Leftist" nonsense, which masks a Social-Democratic, narrow guild approach to non-proletarian masses, and which we must now clear out of the way, as thoroughly as we cleaned out the Right-wing opportunism of Lovestone-Pepper on the Labor Party question. The movement of poor and middle farmers, their struggle against the miseries inflicted upon them by the crisis and the Roosevelt policies, their hatred against the common enemy, Wall Street and the monopolists, is one of the chief factors of the proposed united-front party; there is no serious reason why the name "Farmer-Labor Party" cannot be adopted if and when that will facilitate the cementing of the alliance with the farmers' movement. The whole question of name is one of expediency, not of principle; and the attempt to transform it into a question of principle reflects the too narrow conception of the class composition of the Party.

On the question of a program for the united-front party, we

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proposed a series of quite correct and fundamental demands, which already have big and growing mass support, such as unemployment insurance, civil rights, Negro rights, relief for the farmers, etc. But it has been becoming ever clearer that this is not enough; the masses have a burning desire for measures directed towards reopening the closed factories, which brings them to support such distorted formulations of their demands as the Upton Sinclair EPIC program; they want an extension of democratic rights to enable them to bring their pressure upon the legislators more effectively, and this desire is manipulated by the reformists and semi-fascist demagogues. It is clear that the united-front party must extend its program to such issues, formulating them in such a fashion as to contribute to mobilization and consolidation of the masses instead of quieting and dispersing them as at present. We can take the feature of the EPIC program which aroused mass enthusiasm, and divest it of Sinclair's reformist robes, by putting forth the demand that the government shall confiscate every factory that closes down or dismisses a large part of its workers, and shall itself operate these enterprises, paying union wage rates. We can demand the abolition of the present unequal representation in Congress, particularly the Senate; and the abolition of the usurped power of the Supreme Court to avoid social legislation; these two demands have wide popularity, but are now the object solely of demagogic manipulation. The united-front party must bring forward a rounded-out tax program, not simply as we have done so far only on specific measures like unemployment insurance and the veterans' bonus, but for providing for the entire government budget at the expense of the rich, relieving the poor of taxation, abolishing sales taxes, and fighting unrelentingly against inflation. The program must add a series of projects for public works, designed to meet the needs of the impoverished masses, furnishing housing, schools, hospitals, playgrounds, etc., for the masses. This program must take up the fight against the tremendous corruption prevailing in every phase of government.

WE MUST PRESENT A CONCRETE PROGRAM TO THE MASSES

We have, up to the present, given the masses a perspective for such a united-front party as an effective means of bringing pressure upon the ruling class, forcing concessions from them, and organizing the masses. We must say that we have felt that the masses to whom we speak are not satisfied with this alone; without being clearly formulated, the question has always been present:

"But what then? Will we not fight for a majority? What will

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we do with it? Can we form a government with such a party? What could such a government do?"

These questions we have not answered squarely, and therefore we have been at a disadvantage in our struggle with the reformists who answer them wrongly. The questions must be answered now, otherwise the masses will not believe that we take the proposed party really seriously. We can answer these question on the basis of Comrade Dimitroff's report.

We must say clearly, yes, we will fight together with all those in the united front, for a majority in all elective bodies, local, State and national. We will support such a party, whenever and wherever it wins a majority, in taking over administrative powers, so long as it really uses these powers to protect and extend democratic liberties and advance the demands of the masses. But the masses will ask us: What will be your role? Will you stand aside as critics, preaching merely for a Soviet Power for which we are not ready to fight? We answer: the Communists are even prepared to participate in such a government. We openly declare that such a government will not be able to introduce Socialism, which is possible only at the hands of a really revolutionary government—a Soviet Government —but that it can prevent fascism from coming to power, can protect the democratic liberties of the toiling masses, can fight off hunger and economic chaos, and give the toiling masses *time to learn*, through their own experience, what is the larger, more deep-going program around which they must unite in order to realize a Socialist society, and who can lead them to this only final solution of their problems.

I do not need to emphasize that the question of such a government is hardly an immediate practical question for us in the form presented in France or England. However, it may be quite practical soon in many cities and States. In another sense it is a practical question now, because the American workers will not go with any party that does not give a clear answer on the question of government.

PROSPECTS FOR A UNITED FRONT PARTY

What are the prospects for such a united-front party coming into existence? Are the masses really moving and struggling sufficiently to give it a realistic basis? Will these masses who are still far from us accept the Communists into such a movement?

We have no illusions. This will be a very hard struggle. The bourgeoisie, the top American Federation of Labor bureaucracy, the Right-wing Socialists, many liberal bourgeois politicians, not to speak of the Hearsts, Coughlins and Longs, will do everything possible to exclude the Communists from such a movement. They may even resort to illegalizing our Party.

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What are the most dangerous enemies of such a party among the masses who are being radicalized? First, are the various semi-fascist demagogues, such as Huey Long and Father Coughlin. There is not yet, it must be remembered, a definitely crystallized fascist movement in the U.S.A.; there is only a multitude of fascist tendencies, as Comrade Foster described. Second, there are the bourgeois reformists of the type of Upton Sinclair, Townsend, etc., not to be lumped with the fascists, as Comrade Dutt correctly warned us, although he evidently misunderstood Comrade Foster, who issues precisely the same warning. What is true, however, is that they tend to play into the hands of fascist forces and tendencies; they play the old Roosevelt tunes, only in a little higher key, but the overcoming of the demagogy is a more complicated and difficult task. Third, is the upper bureaucracy of the American Federation of Labor, most decisive of all obstacles because it has organizational strongholds among the worker-masses, and is the sworn enemy of a united-front party; it is at present merely an extension of the Roosevelt political machine, but with the crystallization of a mass party would probably try to head it in order to behead it. The American Federation of Labor bureaucracy is, as even Professor Moley, the Brain Truster, pointed out, more connected with the State apparatus and bourgeois parties than in any other democratic country, as were the British trade-union leaders before the formation of the Labor Party. Fourth, is the grouping of "progressive third party" advocates, who held a conference in Chicago on July 4, calling for a new party without the Communists and opposed to the Communists; this grouping contains elements who could profitably be won for the anti-fascist united front, alongside of others of a clearly defined fascist tendency. Fifth, is the Socialist Party, which is increasingly divided into two camps: the Right wing is the most vicious and irreconcilable enemy of the united front, collaborating even with the open fascist Hearst to fight against the Communists and against the Soviet Union; the broad Left wing includes some convinced adherents of the united front, and as a whole reflects to some degree the demands of the masses; the Left elements and the mass of Socialist Party followers can and must be won for the united front.

Will the masses accept the Communist Party participation in such a united-front party? There is growing evidence of an affirmative answer. In the trade unions, the instructions of the bureaucracy for the expulsion of individual Communists, issued last September, was generally disregarded and in a multitude of cases openly rejected; in contrast to the pre-crisis period, when a similar order succeeded in driving almost all revolutionary elements out of

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the American Federation of Labor, this one was a dismal failure. Only a few weeks ago, a threat to expel a whole union in an effort to prevent an amalgamation with the Red union in the same industry, was unanimously defied by the workers. Among the farm organizations, a more receptive attitude toward the Communists and above all an increasing hatred against fascism was sufficiently strong to bring a very significant statement from the chief reformist leader, Milo Reno. He wrote on June 25:

> "I will say frankly that if I am compelled to make a choice between a fascist dictatorship, in which a few, who have gathered unto themselves the wealth created by others, supported by a military dictator which will make of all those who serve, simply beasts of burden, or the Communist idea of tearing down the whole system and then rebuilding it, I would be inclined to the latter."

Even more clear, and of similar significance, is the statement of a leading Right-wing liberal, Dr. David Saposs. Speaking on July 5, before the Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia, he said:

> "Nothing short of an enduring, far-sighted and courageous alliance of the liberal middle class, the Socialists and Communists, can keep the middle class and workers from abdicating to fascism, and the whole world from being precipitated into another war.
>
> "Can the liberal middle class, Socialists and Communists unite on such a program? If they can, the future of the world is indeed rosy. If they cannot, then darkness and catastrophe stare us in the face."

The problem of bringing together into a lasting coalition united front party, all the still scattered elements of which it must be composed is a complicated and difficult task. It will require the utmost of patience, perserverance, tactfulness, and loyal devotion of the Communists to bring it to a successful consummation. It will require vigilance against Right opportunist interpretations of the line.

In the welding together of such a broad people's movement a tremendously important role can and must be played by the revolutionary traditions of America, revived and applied to the problems of the present crisis. Our Party has been struggling for some years to throw off that sectarian infantile Leftism which negates the national pride and national traditions that live among the broad masses. The Manifesto of our Eighth Convention last year, in which we boldly proclaimed our Party as the heir and continuer of the revolutionary traditions of 1776 and 1861, declared our love for our country which is being despoiled and ruined by Wall Street monopolists, was our conclusive break with past sectarianism on this question. It is

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with deep joy, therefore, that we welcome the words of Comrade Dimitroff, who has shown us also in deeds how a true Bolshevik deals with such problems.

The broadening of our conception of the United-front party, as the lasting coalition of workers, farmers, and city middle classes, to fight against threatening economic catastrophe, against political reaction and fascism, and against the threatening war, requires that we shall even more energetically pursue the struggle for *working class unity*. Such a lasting coalition requires for its success a strong and ever more united working class as the cementing, leading force. And the central problem of working class unity is that of creating a strong and united trade union movement. I want to state clearly, the decisive question in realizing such a united-front party is winning the support of the organized workers. Without that basis we cannot build a party with both feet on the ground. It would become a football for everybody to play with.

THE STRUGGLE FOR TRADE UNION UNIFICATION

Our most prized achievement of the past period is our success in the struggle for trade union unification. During the years 1925 to 1929, the A. F. of L. bureaucracy had prostituted the trade unions to the role of rationalization auxiliaries to the employers; to carry through this policy they made a war of extermination against the Communists and Left elements, not hesitating at the destruction of mass trade unions, the dispersal of hundreds of thousands of members. Out of this situation arose the independent and revolutionary unions. These new unions, arising after defeated strikes and just at the period of the onset of the economic crisis, and the consequent decline of the strike movement up to 1932, lived a difficult and precarious life. Their history is, however, one with many glorious pages. They made a permanent contribution to the development of the American working class. There were mistakes made in their development. These were especially sectarian mistakes, tending to narrow down the new unions to the advance guard. There was also a most serious neglect of work in the A. F. of L. But the independent unions played an indispensable role. They preserved the fighting spirit and traditions of the American working class during dark days when no other instrument was available for this task. They smashed the legend of the impossibility of successful strike struggles during a time of economic crisis, a legend spread by the reformists and Trotskyists. They organized and led the chief struggles that marked the turn of the tide and drew the whole trade union movement into its stream. To them belongs much of the credit for the strong re-emergence of the whole trade union move-

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ment in 1933. The contributions of the independent and revolutionary unions to the protection of working class conditions, and to the preservation of trade unionism, are written imperishably in our history.

With the streaming of new hundreds of thousands of workers into the American Federation of Labor, however, with the organization of hitherto unorganized basic industries, and the rise of the strike wave and fighting spirit generally, the conditions had been created for the reunification of the trade unions in most industries and as a general rule. We must say that we did not at once understand the full significance of these changes, or immediately draw the full lessons. We had to learn from the masses. But we learned, having also the advice and assistance of the E.C.C.I. We began already in 1933, in some industries and localities, to take advantage of these new conditions to merge the divided trade union forces. During the last half of 1934, we had already developed this into a general movement for unification in all industries. During the first half of 1935, we succeeded in merging the unions in the most important industries, so that it became possible to dissolve the independent general trade union center; a Unification Committee continues to centralize the efforts of the still-existing independent unions to unite with the A. F. of L. The urge for unity among the masses made it possible to overcome the resistance of the American Federation of Labor bureaucracy to this unfication, forced the admission of Communists and revolutionary workers in spite of the declared policy of the bureaucracy to expell all Communists. The artificial barriers of separate trade unions dividing the workers in the same field in fraticidal struggle has been largely broken down and eliminated.

The possibility of this unification movement arose out of the powerful upsurge in the labor movement, the big changes in the composition of the American Federation of Labor membership, and their situation, under the blows of the crisis. A flood of new members, including masses of semi-skilled and unskilled from the basic industries, helped to overcome the traditions and habits based upon the old aristocracy of labor, strengthened the militancy of the unions. At the same time, the labor aristocracy was itself hard hit by the crisis; this is especially true in the building trades, from 60 to 80 per cent unemployed for years now; while the technological advance, the development of continuous production processes, the belt system, etc., has undermined the position of the skilled workers throughout industry. One of the results is the growing radicalization of native-born workers, whose hitherto privileged position was historically a tremendous barrier to the political independence of the labor movement—a fact noted by Engels many years ago. The result is, that

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even large numbers of lower and middle trade union officials, formerly the backbone of the bureaucratic machine, are beginning to reflect the radicalization of these strata, to turn toward the semi-skilled and unskilled masses, to demand complete unionization of their industries, industrial unionism, unity and solidarity in struggles. We have experienced the transformation of such lower and middle officials, in the course of a few months, from the position of expelling Communists to the position of open allies with us in serious conflict with the upper bureaucracy and employers. Comrade Florin gave interesting examples of a similar change taking place in Germany under the blows of fascism. This change has necessitated a fundamental change in attitude and approach toward such strata; where but a few years ago it would have been opportunist nonsense to look in this direction for allies, it has now become a most practical and key question of revolutionary policy. Our experience shows that such workers are key men, decisive in the factories and trade unions, in organizing and leading mass struggles.

A natural result of this successful reorientation in the trade unions has been that the Communists are coming forward, not only as the foremost champions of unity, but also the most energetic and practical organizers of the unorganized into the A. F. of L. unions. Only where our forces have appeared as the initiators of unionization from the beginning have we reaped the full fruits of deep-going and unshakable foundations of our mass influence under all attacks. In this there are direct lessons for our trade union workers of all lands.

We think the resolution should be strengthened in the trade union section, to state it is the duty of Communists to defend the mass trade unions against all capitalist and fascist attacks, and to build them, even though they are under the influence of the reformists. This would strengthen our positive work, and wipe out the sectarian distortions that have crept into our work in past years.

It is because our Party has been able to make advances in rooting itself thus among the basic trade union masses, that we have been able to extend and widen our united front among the youth, among the farmers, among the city middle classes. It is this that enables us to talk seriously, small as our Party still is, about being one of the decisive factors in the gathering together of a broad anti-fascist people's front which can check the advance of fascism in the United States, which can preserve the democratic rights of the masses now under such severe attack, which can effect some amelioration in the catastrophic economic situation of the masses, and which can provide the opportunity which the million masses require in order, through their own experience, to learn the further path they must travel before they can find the final solution of their problems.

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WE MUST ISOLATE AND DEFEAT THE S.P. OLD GUARD

Now what are the special problems in relation to the Socialist Party and the proposed united front mass party? I have already indicated the task to win over those sections of the Socialists which are moving to the Left. That means to isolate and defeat the Old Guard leaders, who are consciously and stubbornly counter-revolutionary and who collaborate with open fascists like Hearst.

The World War and the October Revolution, which brought to a split the international Socialist movement, interrupted in the United States the process of emergence of the Socialist Party as the mass party of the working class at a much earlier stage than in Europe. The ruthless expulsion from the Socialist Party by its Right-wing leaders of the large majority of its members who had taken the path to the Communist International shattered the Socialist Party, but at the same time brought the Communist Party into existence in an immature condition, split into two Communist Parties at birth, without trained organizational cadres, and afflicted by all the infantile sicknesses. This condition was accentuated by the governmental repressions and illegalization of the Communists. The connection with the main mass of the American workers was broken for both Parties. The Communist Party is only now beginning to reconquer, on a higher stage, some of the mass positions in the process of being won for Socialism when interrupted by the war and the split in the Socialist movement. The Socialist Party leaders, until recently undeviatingly Right-wing in orientation, maintained a precarious position only by sacrificing even their reformist Socialist program to an alliance with the openly pro-capitalist A. F. of L. bureaucracy. This accounts for the unparalleled weakness of the American Socialist Party as an independent political factor.

There can be no doubt that the split in the Socialist movement, the long struggle between the Socialist and Communist Parties, served to repel large masses of workers who, not understanding the issues involved turned their backs on both parties and upon Socialism in general. This in turn weakened the power of Socialism to attract the non-proletarian strata around itself and gather the allies of the revolution. The Right-wing leaders have utilized this fact to instill among the Socialist workers a prejudice against the Communists as splitters and disrupters who ruined the American Socialist movement, quietly ignoring their own role as the violators of party democracy who expelled the majority of the membership who had decided to go to the Third International. This was done by the same Old Guard—the Cahans, Lees, and Oneals—who today again threaten a split against the majority which adopted the Detroit Declaration. On our

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part, we Communists never sufficiently made known to the broad masses of Socialist workers the true history and character of the split. The struggle for united front with the Socialist Party and its followers, therefore, today must surmount and overcome these long-confirmed prejudices. This cannot be done merely by reciting facts and lessons from history. It must be done politically, by giving an answer to that healthy desire of the Socialist rank and file for a united proletarian party of Socialism, a desire for unity growing out of the needs of daily struggle, which the Right-wing leaders distort into an obstacle to unity.

FOR UNITED PROLETARIAN ACTION, FOR THE POLITICAL UNIFICATION OF THE PROLETARIAT

This means that we must raise and discuss with the Socialist workers the problem of organic unity in one party of all adherents of Socialism, the conditions for such unity, and how it can be achieved. We must put forward the proposed united-front party, the Farmer-Labor Party, as a possible long step forward toward such unity, provided the Socialists and Communists find a common platform for joint participation in creating and building such a united front mass party. We must put forward the slogan of united action between all adherents of Socialism, despite all disagreements as to how Socialism can be achieved, in the struggle for the immediate interests of the toiling masses, in the defense of democratic rights and to defeat the advance of fascism; we must put this slogan in sharp opposition to that of the Old Guard leaders, which calls for a united front with the open supporters of capitalism, the American Federation of Labor top bureaucracy, with Woll, Lewis, Green, and even Hearst, against the Communists. On this question, the experiences of our French comrades are of inestimable value to us. We must and will win the support of the Socialist Party members and followers for united action, for the united-front mass party; in this task, the perspective of the ultimate organic unity of all adherents of Socialism in a single proletarian party will be of great help, while at the same time it will stimulate the political thought and revolutionizing tendencies in the Socialist Party ranks.

For this purpose it is necessary to make more intimate contacts with active Socialists, to be more discriminating between individuals and tendencies, and not to lump them all into one basket under one label. We must win their confidence by actually being of assistance to them in solving their complicated and difficult problems. It is not easy to fight for the united front in the Socialist Party. Quite the opposite of the Communist Party, where an opponent of the united front could not be long active, in the Socialist Party it is the supporters

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of the united front who are being kicked out. And yet the S. P. cannot make a single step to rehabilitate itself among the masses so long as it refuses the path of the united front. This was strikingly proved, only in the past weeks, in the inglorious collapse of the majority of the National Executive Committee which had championed the Leftward-moving Declaration of Principles with support from a majority of the membership, its abject surrender under the assaults of the minority Old Guard—a debacle flowing directly out of the refusal of these self-styled Militants to take a single decisive step toward realizing the united front.

We must make it clear to the S. P. members that, without abandoning for an instant our principled position on the question of the road to power and the building of Socialism, we are not demanding of them their agreement with roletarian dictatorship, Soviet Power, and armed insurrection as a condition for the united front, for united action, for the present defense of democratic liberties and immediate economic interests. We are proposing a coalition of all anti-fascist forces, to prevent the coming to power of the most reactionary, most predatory section of monopoly capital, to prevent America from being engulfed in the world-wide wave of fascist reaction, to preserve the American toilers from a repetition of the bestial horrors suffered by the German masses under Hitler. We propose a joint struggle in which the workers will become conscious of themselves as a class, know their class interests and historical mission, and unite solidly under their leadership all other strata of the suffering toiling population, and thus prepare to lead America forward to the new society, to Socialism.

This is a program of struggle. It will not be carried out by the issuance of a manifesto, nor through spontaneous or automatic development. It will require all the abilities, resources, determination and energies of our Party. With the masses of the American workers and toilers, through the creative energies of these masses, this program can be realized in life. The Communist Party of the U.S.A. will carry on this fight to realize in the shortest possible time such a concentration of forces of the anti-fascist front that will guarantee against the victory of fascism in America. And that will at the same time be the best preparation for the proletarian revolution, the Socialist revolution.

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The General Strike in Terre Haute

By B. K. GEBERT

A WORKER from Terre Haute, Indiana, on the second day of the general strike, wrote as follows:

> "Terre Haute is in the grip of a general strike today. Years of resentment and hatred against the Chamber of Commerce and reactionary leadership of the American Federation of Labor have resulted in a paralyzing rank-and-file controlled mass strike. Forty-eight local unions are out on the basis of a demand that the Burns' scab agency remove fifty gunmen from the Stamping Mill property. Dozens of coal mines are closed in this vicinity, and District 12 of Illinois has sent word that if necessary, it will come out one hundred per cent. This is a slap in the face to the no-strike edicts of John L. Lewis and his maudlin respect for his own sell-out 'contracts' with the operators. There were 10,000 on the picket lines last night. Thousands of strikers are going over town closing what few places are left open. They just closed Thompson's restaurant and are going out on Main Street. All labor realizes that the fate of unionism in Terre Haute is at stake.
>
> "Musgrave and Schaeffer, leaders of the American Federation of Labor, tried to explain to the rank and file that they were acting contrary to the principles of Bill Green and attempted to lead them to have faith in 'Labor's Magna Charta' (the Wagner Labor Disputes Act). The rank and file jeered them into silence and they left crest-fallen.
>
> "This strike is labor's answer to a 'vigilante' citizens group which met a few days ago, consisting of Blumberg, Chief of Police Wheeler and Bankers. This committee called on the people to rally to their leadership and drive 'alien' and 'subversive' and 'imported' agitators from our midst. The strikers answered by showing that Blumberg is a non-resident of Terre Haute, save for his millions of holdings, and that the strike leaders have lived here for years.
>
> "This strike affects 100,000 people in Vigo County and untold thousands around. It is impossible to explain all the details of the splendid fight which has led up to the present strike."

The general strike in Terre Haute came about, when after 18 weeks of strike, the Columbia Enameling and Stamping Company imported 50 gunmen for the purpose of terrorizing the strikers who went out on the demands for union recognition and an increase of wages up to $20 per week. Terre Haute is known in the State of Indiana as the best organized city. The workers there refused to tolerate imported gunmen. A conference of delegates of 48 local unions of the A. F. of L., defying the official leadership of the Central Labor Union, unanimously declared that

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". . . unless these strikebreakers are deported out of Vigo County by or before 1 a.m. Monday, July 22, 1935, we, organized labor of every craft and industry in the city and county, will declare a labor holiday until such action has been enforced."

The workers of Terre Haute and Vigo County, organized and unorganized, put this decision into effect 100 per cent. The strike received sympathetic support from small businessmen and professional people. The whole industrial and commercial life of the county was put at a standstill for 48 hours. The general strike had been declared for the purpose of driving out from the city of Terre Haute and Vigo County strikebreakers and thugs who, according to a letter from a worker, "armed with shotguns and machine guns were placed behind mill gates ready at any moment to open fire upon the pickets".

How did the city, county, and State governments meet this situation? Did they comply with the just demand of the toiling people of Terre Haute? Did they drive out the imported strikebreakers and gunmen? No, on the contrary, the Republican Mayor Beecher and Democratic Sheriff Baker deputized additional thugs, and Democratic Governor McNutt (former national commander of the American Legion) dispatched National Guards with full war equipment ready to use violence and murder against the peaceful toiling population of the county. The National Guard was armed with machine guns, tear gas, and airplanes, and martial law was declared on the very first day of the strike. But, despite the martial law, despite bayonets ready for use in the hands of the National Guard, despite all the armed forces of the State, the workers refused to capitulate. They justly felt that they had right on their side. If, after 48 hours of strike in which not even a small group of workers broke the unity and solidarity, the strikers displaying magnificent discipline and defiance to the military rule, the strike was called off without obtaining its aims, the responsibility rests with the official leadership of the city, State and executive council of the A. F. of L. The top officialdom, from William Green, president of the A. F. of L., to T. N. Taylor, A. F. of L. organizer in Terre Haute, and top leaders of the Central Labor Council, did everything in their power to crush the strike and finally, without the consent of the workers, called off the strike. We must reemphasize once more that the strike was not broken. The strike was surrendered.

There were weaknesses in the strike in the sense that the conference of 48 local unions of the A. F. of L. did not set up a broad strike committee. The conference confined itself primarily

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to a declaration of strike. The rest was carried on spontaneously by organized and unorganized workers of Terre Haute.

General strikebreaker, Hugh S. Johnson, in his article in the New York *World-Telegram* of July 29, 1935, declared: "One side of the ending of the Terre Haute general strike has not been made clear enough in the news. It is the good part played by the Department of Labor and the leaders of the labor movement in America".

The strikebreaking general is well pleased that William Green and company played a role of stabbing the strike in the back. But General Johnson goes further than that. He expresses the panic of the bourgeoisie which views the general strike in the words of the *Chicago Tribune*. "Terre Haute was only the handwriting on the wall".

STRIKEBREAKERS POLEMIZE AGAINST THE GENERAL STRIKE

General Johnson attempts to cover his panic and the panic of his class in the face of the mighty unity and solidarity of the whole labor movement in Terre Haute by shedding crocodile tears that "the general strike stops milk for babies and invalids". What hypocrisy! Strikebreaker No. 1 of the United States suddenly sheds tears for the babies of the working class! How touching! This same General Johnson, who in the present strike on W.P.A. projects in New York City, by enforcing coolie wages and declaring that "you cannot strike", is really taking milk from babies, suddenly becomes a defender of babies in Terre Haute! It is not the babies that are the concern of General Johnson. He is really concerned with the general strike as a mighty weapon in the hands of the working class that can force concessions from the capitalist class. The general strike touches the heart of the bourgeoisie, their pocketbook, and forces them to open it. General Johnson closes his article with praise of those who were most responsible for ending the strike and says: "William Green took the same vigorous and courageous stand that he took on the San Francisco general strike". He fully recognizes the services rendered here by William Green to the boss class. It by no means, however, prevents the Strikebreaker No. 1 from charging the trade union officials of New York with being "Communistic" because they happen to declare a strike on the W.P.A. projects.

The *New York Times*, in its editorial on July 25, polemizes against using the general strike weapon by the trade unions in struggle for immediate demands because: "The general strike is *an instrument of social revolution rather than as a serviceable weapon in an ordinary industrial dispute*". (Emphasis ours.)

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AS TO "MAJOR" AND "MINOR" PURPOSES

This conception, unfortunately, prevails not only in the columns of the capitalist organs. The *Milwaukee Leader*, the official organ of the Socialist Party of Wisconsin, a party led by none other than Mayor Hoan, who just recently concluded the "peace pact" between the "militants" and Old Guard of the Socialist Party, in which the "militants" capitulated to the "Old Guard", on the same day, July 25, writes:

> "The general strike is more adapted to political or public ends. It might well be used for the purpose of stopping a war, or for the purpose of preventing the formation of a fascist regime, or for preventative or constructive purposes in other times of crisis. These would be major objectives. General strikes for minor purposes, such as those at San Francisco or Terre Haute, show what labor might do in a major crisis."

Let us examine this question for a moment. "General strikes for minor purposes" are, first of all, not for minor purposes at all. An ex-Socialist worker from Terre Haute correctly placed the question when he declared that in the general strike in Terre Haute "the fate of unionism is at stake". Surely this is not a minor question. The workers did not look upon the general strike as a trifling matter, but a *higher stage of development in the class struggle.* The workers use the weapon of general strike to force concessions from the employers. They displayed the might of unity and solidarity of labor. They acted as a class.

Comrade Earl Browder, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the United States, speaking about the San Francisco general strike during which, as was also the case in Terre Haute, the frightened bourgeoisie raised the cry that that strike was nothing less than a preparation for a revolution, gave the proper answer:

> "It was the capitalist class, which, in panic before the rising giant of the class action of the masses, cried out that this strike, which they could have settled very quickly at any moment by the simple expedient of granting the *workers' economic demands*, was actually a revolutionary uprising organized by the Communist Party to overthrow the whole capitalist system in San Francisco. Of course, this strike did not have a revolution as its objective, certainly not a revolution in a single city, *but only winning the immediate demands of the workers.*" ([Emphasis ours.] Earl Browder, *Communism in the United States*, International Publishers, p. 250.)

The San Francisco general strike was instrumental in winning demands for the marine workers. No one will dispute the fact that the San Francisco general strike in support of the general srtike of the marine workers, led by Harry Bridges, was responsible for

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gaining concessions from the shipowners. It is precisely because the San Francisco general strike forced concessions from the employers that there is such a panic in the ranks of the employers of the country; this is responsible for the campaign they undertake in their press against general strike as a means of forcing concessions.

Disposing so easily of the general strike "for minor purposes", the *Milwaukee Leader* became a champion for general strike "for major objectives". But how can this be accomplished? How shall we go about achieving those major objectives? To this, of course, one can find no answer, not only in the editorial of the *Milwaukee Leader*, but also not in the theory and practice of international Social-Democracy, because Menshevism is opposed to the general strike. And if it does participate in general strike, it is because of compulsion from below and with the objective of wrecking it from within. We also can recollect the fact that there was much talk of using the weapon of general strike to stop war. But what is happening in England, for example? As the new world war grows more imminent, we find the British Labor Party leadership reversing itself on its previous declaration in favor of a general strike to avert war. Furthermore, in 1926, the issue in England was certainly not for a "minor purpose". But what did the ideological brothers in arms of the *Milwaukee Leader* do in England? The treachery of the Hendersons, the Citrines, the Thomases and the MacDonalds will forever brand as cynical and hypocritical the mouthings of Menshevism about postponing general strikes for "major purposes". With such phrases, Social-Democracy is only giving lip service to the words "general strike", because the masses more and more begin to learn the meaning of the weapon of sympathetic and general strike.

THE UN-MARXIAN POSITION OF THE MILWAUKEE LEADER

The Social-Democracy, likewise, draws a line between the economic struggles of the working class and the political struggles. It does not recognize with Karl Marx that every class struggle is a political struggle, that economic strikes manifest themselves as political strikes, that there is no Chinese Wall dividing them. As a matter of fact, in the present sharpening class relations, in the present period of prolonged depression, even struggles for minor economic demands tend to grow increasingly into big political conflicts between labor and capital.

The *Milwaukee Leader* also does not see the relationship between the struggle for immediate demands and the final objectives, because here, too, they only give lip service to the words "socialist society",

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a sort of a "Sunday dress" to be worn on special occasions. To speak of ultimate objectives without connecting them and the struggle to achieve them with the day-to-day—yes, minor—issues confronting the workers, is to be guilty of phrase-mongering. Such talk about "major" issues is merely a screen to conceal unreadiness to give leadership to the struggles for vital daily demands. The Austro-Marxists spoke this way about distant objectives; but due to the brakes which they put upon the wheels of the daily class struggle, when the moment came, in February, 1934, for engaging in the colossal struggle for a major objective, the working class found itself reduced to the defensive. Clearly, there can be no such mechanical separation as the *Milwaukee Leader* introduces between the "minor" and "major" objectives of the proletariat.

The general strike is a school for the working class. Workers in a general strike display their unity and solidarity. They come into open clash with the State apparatus which sides with the employers against the workers and therefore makes much more clear to the workers the class character of the State which protects the interest of the capitalist class and attempts to crush the working class, which at this stage of development demands a higher standard of living, the right to organize and protection of the civil rights of the people.

The *Milwaukee Leader* also has doubts as to whether the Socialist Party shall support general strikes for immediate economic demands. It writes:

> "It is interesting that this general strike took place in the home city of the late Eugene V. Debs. In courage and audacity it manifested his spirit, although *no one can tell whether, if he were alive, he would have advised it.*" (Emphasis ours.)

We can assure the editor of the *Milwaukee Leader* that if Debs were alive, that he would be in the very ranks of the strike. Of this we have no doubt. Was it not Eugene V. Debs who organized the American railway men in 1893 and led the historic strike of the railroad men? Who does not remember the epic struggle of the railroad workers in Pullman, Illinois? Anyone who knows anything about Debs knows that he would be with the workers against all those who sat in opposition to the workers in that general strike. The American proletarian writer, Jack London, pictured Debs well when he wrote a pamphlet about general strikes and called it "The Dream of Debs". The *Milwaukee Leader* further polemizes against the general strike as a weapon for enforcing the immediate demands of the workers and argues against this weapon in the following words:

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> "There is *much danger* in calling a general strike for the accomplishment of minor purposes. The unions which go out in sympathy may have contracts with their employers and the employers might elect to consider the contracts ended. Probably this will not happen, but the danger is there, *and the longer the sympathetic strike lasts, the more the danger.*" (Emphasis ours.)

And this is written in the Socialist Party organ! How different the tone sounds from the letter quoted at the opening of this article written by a worker who is a former member of the Socialist Party! This worker does not hesitate to greet with enthusiasm the general strike, yet the official organ of the Socialist Party attempts to throw a wet blanket over the struggles of the workers. Do not use the weapon of general strike, use it only "for the purpose of stopping war" says the *Milwaukee Leader*, but we sincerely believe that without using the weapon of general strike as it was used in San Francisco and Terre Haute, there will be no general strike in the struggle to stop war. Those who are opposed to the use of general strike to gain immediate needs of the masses today, are bound to be opposed to a general strike or any other mass action in the struggle against war and against fascism. This so-called "Left" approach to general strike, that it can be used only for "big" things, is an attempt to disarm, to disorientate the workers, and attempt to hold them back.

The *Milwaukee Leader*, in the last analysis, draws the same conclusion as the *New York Times*—that sympathetic strikes in support of the fighting section of the working class are useless. With what indignation will the workers of Terre Haute, particularly, read these concluding remarks of the *Milwaukee Leader*: "And the longer the sympathetic strike lasts—the more the danger". We may ask: "The danger for whom?" Who really was in danger in Terre Haute during the 48-hour strike? The workers? No. The employers were the ones who felt the danger in that they would be forced to grant concessions to the workers. That is why they practically declared war against the general strike. They brought in every military resource in their possession. They appealed to the strikebreaking Department of Labor. William Green played his role and he receives his praise from General Johnson. But what really ended the strike? Why was the strike surrendered? Not by the workers. The workers felt no danger, but on the contrary they are demonstrating their power and their unity and they will be able to force the capitalist class to grant their very modest demands. If they have been robbed of the victory which was in their reach, it was precisely because of the policy pursued by the top officialdom of the A. F. of L.

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How different are the conclusions drawn by the Communist Party in Terre Haute. In a local leaflet issued to the workers, entitled: *We Learn from the General Strike,* the Communist Party declares:

> "Contrary to the false claim of misleaders like William Green and Louis Musgrave, *the Terre Haute general strike indicated how powerful a weapon such a strike can be, and if properly led, a general strike can win real concessions for the workers.*"

The *Milwaukee Leader* in the aforementioned editorial, as a sort of second thought, states: "In any event, labor shows its power—and that's something. Labor needs to learn that it is all powerful, and get rid of its inferiority complex". Yes, labor shows its power, but above all, labor learns from the general strike. It learns that it can be victorious in a general strike in its struggle for immediate demands and it was robbed of its victory in Terre Haute precisely because of the top leadership of the A. F. of L. The average worker and trade unionist realizes above all that in his struggle against employers he has at his disposal the weapon of a strike. It may be a strike of one factory or a general strike in the given industry for economic demands, and he also realizes that in support of such strikes there can be sympathetic and solidarity strikes of organized and unorganized workers of the given city and state and even nationally. For instance, there can be a one day demonstrative strike demanding withdrawal of troops in a strike in a given city or industry or against the passing of an anti-labor law. Recently, in Poland, a one day general strike was proclaimed against the instituting of a new constitution by the Polish parliament "Sejm", which deprives the people of the right of direct vote in elections. In this instance a number of industrial centers protested and demonstrated their opposition to such a law through a strike. We Communists are fully aware of the fact that a strike is a very important instrument in the hands of the workers, but not the only instrument at the disposal of the working class.

THE LESSONS OF THE GENERAL STRIKE

What are the immediate conclusions that the workers of Terre Haute can draw as a result of their experience in the general strike. One, is that workers shall form a united labor party, that will embrace trade unionists, unemployed, Negroes, toiling farmers, ex-servicemen and the middle class, to place in office mayors and sheriffs who will not be the tools of the employers' Republican and Democratic parties, but union men who in a strike will be on the side of labor, will give direct assistance to labor and not, as was the case in Terre Haute, a union town, side with the bosses against the

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workers. The Terre Haute general strike registered once more that in the present period of depression of capitalist economy, that the smallest struggle sharpens the class relations and raises the struggle to a higher stage. The general strike further raises the question that labor cannot be free unless it frees itself from the rule of the capitalist class and takes power into its own hands. Of course, the general strike is not the only means to achieve such an aim. The greatest teacher of the working class, V. I. Lenin, wrote:

> "One of the German Ministers of the Interior, who became particularly famous by persecuting with all his might the Socialists and the class conscious workers, recently declared before the representatives of the people: 'Behind every strike lurks the hydra (monster) of the revolution.' With every strike there becomes stronger and develops among the workers the consciousness that the government is its enemy, that the working class must prepare for the struggle against it for people's rights. Thus the strikes teach the workers how to unite; the strikes show them that only together can they conduct the struggle against the capitalists. The strikes teach the workers how to think about the struggle of the entire working class against the entire class of manufacturers and against the autocratic police government. That is why the Socialists call the strikes 'a school of war' in which the workers learn to conduct a war against their enemies for the liberation of the whole people and all the toilers from under the pressure of the officers and from under the pressure of capital. But 'a school of war' is not yet war itself. When strikes become widespread among the workers, then some workers (and some Socialists) begin to think that the working class can confine itself to strikes and strike funds or societies only, that by means of strikes alone can the working class achieve an earnest improvement of its position, or even its liberation. Seeing what power the united workers and even their small strikes represent, some think that if only the workers will organize a *general strike* throughout the whole country —then the workers can force capital and the government to yield all they want. Such an opinion was expressed also by workers of other countries when the labor movement was just beginning and the workers were yet very inexperienced. *But this opinion is erroneous.* Strikes are *one* of the means of the struggle of the working class for its liberation, but not the sole one, and if the workers will not turn their attention to *other* means of struggle, they will thereby retard the growth and the successes of the working class. ("On Strikes", *Collected Works*, Vol. IX, p. 577, Russian edition.)

The experience of the general strike in San Francisco and Terre Haute, the general strikes in textile and lumber, the solidarity actions in Toledo, Minneapolis, Milwaukee and elsewhere in which the Communist Party played an important role, evidence the fact that our Party has improved its work and has really become an organizer and fighter not separate from the masses, but with the masses themselves. We learn how to apply the *Open Letter* addressed to all members of the Communist Party, adopted by the Extraordinary

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National Conference of the Communist Party held in New York City, July 7-10, 1933, which declares:

> "The center of gravity of Party work must be shifted to the development of the *lower organizations*, the factory nuclei, local organizations and street nuclei. It goes without saying that it is our task to place ourselves at the head of every movement which breaks out spontaneously in the country, and to lead such movements, or where the reformist leaders stand at the head of a movement, to work for the building of fighting organs of the masses, independent of the bureaucrats, in order to aid the masses in the exposure and replacement of the reformist leaders. But unless we tenaciously concentrate our work on the most important industrial centers, we cannot build up a stable Party and revolutionary trade union movement, capable of resisting all blows and persecutions by the bourgeoisie."

In Terre Haute, however, despite the proper orientation of the local Party organization, which raised from the very beginning proper slogans, the Communist Party did not play the role it should have played, because its organizational ties with the trade unions in the city were weak. The sooner the Communist Party in Terre Haute really becomes part and parcel of the organized trade union movement, it will strengthen immensely the whole development in Terre Haute. One cannot effectively influence and lead the movement from outside. One must be in the midst of the fighting army.

The general strike in Terre Haute has been called off, but labor carries on the struggle. It fights back the employers and the government agencies which attempt to suppress its activities. Behind the bayonets of the National Guard, the employers with the active support of the commander of the National Guard are attempting to organize fascist bands. On the initiative of the Central Labor Union, 20,000 people signed pledge cards against the fascist organization set up by the manufacturers. When Professor White, a United States conciliator sent by the Department of Labor, made vicious statements against organized labor, the Executive Board of the Vigo County Central Labor Union of the American Federation of Labor adopted a resolution which declared:

> "The Central Labor Union, further realizing its 'public responsibility', will also continue its fight for free speech, free assembly and a free press, and will use every honorable means at its command to combat the attempt to set up a fascist-military dictatorship in Vigo county that deprives workers of their liberty, keeps them jailed without a charge against them, denies them counsel, trial by jury and even suspends the writ of habeas corpus. Organized labor still stands for liberty and justice."

This clearly indicates that Terre Haute labor is beginning to understand the real meaning of government interference: that it in-

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terferes on the side of the capitalist class against labor. There is considerable agitation for the organization of a broad mass Labor Party, and differentiations begin to be drawn between militant leaders of the rank and file on the one hand and the reactionary officialdom of Taylor and others on the other.

THE NEED FOR LENINIST CLARITY AND LEADERSHIP

The task confronting every Communist, every class conscious worker, is to explain and draw the necessary conclusions from the mass movement of the American proletariat, pointing out the glaring weaknesses of the leadership in our labor movement. The courage and solidarity of the workers in all of the strike struggles and in all of the actions are established but solidarity and courage are not sufficient and cannot substitute for revolutionary understanding and here the application of Lenin's formulation, "without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary practice" applies in full force. Marxist understanding does not drop from the heavens, nor is it a product of one isolated experience in the class struggle. It can only come from the revolutionary party representing the principles of Marxism based upon the scientific analysis of the capitalist development and upon the experiences of the working class in its struggles. This calls for building a mass Communist Party and Young Communist League and entrenching it in the factories, mills and trade unions. The task confronting us is to raise the understanding of the workers to the level of their courage, to reorientate the labor movement in accordance with these tasks and to lend clear and farsighted leadership in the struggles of the American working class. Such are the tasks laid upon our Party by history itself. In this connection, the problem of cadres is one of the most important problems confronting the Communist Party and class conscious workers. Again we can come for guidance to our great teacher, Lenin, who wrote:

> "From all sides one hears with equal frequency passionate appeals for new forces and complaints of the absence of people in the organizations, and at the same time, a gigantic offer of services, a growth of young forces, especially among the working class. . . . The practical organizer who complains of shortage of people in such conditions cannot see the wood for the trees, admits that he is blinded by events, that it is not he, the revolutionary, who dominates them . . . but that they are dominating him or have overwhelmed him. Such an organizer would be well advised to keep quiet, or to leave his place free for younger forces, which have energy. . . . There are people, there is a mass of people. We have only to throw overboard our 'tailist' ideas and teachings to give space for action and initiative, and then we shall prove ourselves worthy representatives of the great revolutionary class." ("New Tactics and New Forces", 1905.)

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The Northwest General Lumber Strike

By N. SPARKS

MARINE and lumber are the two main industries of the Pacific Northwest. While the marine industry can be considered more strategic in general, the relative importance of the Pacific Northwest in the lumber industry is much greater than in marine. In 1931 (as an instance) the States of Washington and Oregon produced 39.6 per cent of all lumber products in the United States, amounting to 34 per cent of the total value and accounting for 34 per cent of the total payrolls of the industry nationally. Throughout the greater part of these two States there is hardly a town that is not involved to some extent in some phase or other of the lumber industry.

THE BACKGROUND OF THE STRIKE—ACHIEVING UNITY

The lumber workers of the Northwest have rich traditions of struggle, and live and work in and around cities that have long been storm centers of the class struggle—Seattle, Portland, Tacoma, Everett, Aberdeen—all seaports, bringing the lumber workers into close contact with the influence and struggles of the marine workers. This is not the case, however, with the other chief areas of lumber production—Upper Michigan and northern Wisconsin, northern Maine and the South. These have always been unorganized areas, and from none of these places has there been any report of any sympathetic or unified action taking place even under the stimulus of the general lumber strike in the Northwest.

During the war the I.W.W. carried on many militant struggles among the Northwest lumber workers—especially the loggers who were largely migratory workers—fighting for better conditions in the logging camps and stimulating resistance to the war. It was in an attempt to crush the general rising tide of militancy among the workers at that time that the bourgeoisie organized the Everett and Centralia massacres which became known the world over.

The lumber bosses did succeed, however, in riveting upon the workers a company union—the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen—known and hated far and wide as the "4 L's"—which, from the end of the war almost until today, served as a model for the whole country in keeping out genuine unions, spying

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upon and blacklisting workers, petitioning for wage-cuts, and disorganizing and preventing struggle.

With the wave of organization which swept the country in 1933, our Party began work among the lumber workers, finally leading to the organization of the National Lumber Workers Union, which conducted some creditable minor struggles. The National Lumber Workers Union, however, did not succeed in breaking through its sectarian shell, in making sufficiently wide contacts with the workers that it would be able to become accepted as *the* union in the industry, and develop the necessary cadres of organizers from among the masses of workers.

At the beginning of 1935 it was apparent that the most important task was the unification of the N.L.W.U. with the small A. F. of L. and independent unions, with the perspective (preferably) of establishing a Lumber Workers International within the A. F. of L., starting an organizational campaign and preparing for struggle. The N.L.W.U. correctly decided to try to make itself the instrument for bringing about the amalgamation, and proposed as the basis of amalgamation a program of struggle for 75 cents an hour, the 30-hour week, the smashing of the hated 4 L's and the establishment of one A. F. of L. union in the industry. But, as events turned out, the N.L.W.U. was not enough of a factor among the workers, especially in the mills and camps, to accomplish this. During this same period the mill owners, hoping to prevent the real unionization of the industry and to forestall the growing strike sentiment, called a 4 L Conference and announced a raise of minimum wages to 50 cents an hour.

In the latter part of March a Convention of the Northwest Council of the *Sawmill and Timber Workers Union* (A. F. of L.) was called in Aberdeen, Wash., by A. W. Muir, Pacific Coast representative of the Carpenters' International, who had been sent in by the Carpenters' Executive which had been granted jurisdiction over the lumber workers by the A. F. of L. Executive Council. This Convention, which was attended by over 200 delegates, accepted the program of the A. F. of L. to affiliate all A. F. of L. lumber unions to the International Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners. This meant, of course, to bring the lumber unions under the Hutcheson machine—one of the most corrupt in the whole A. F. of L. But the same Convention which decided to affiliate to the Carpenters, feeling the tremendous pressure from the rank and file, also *voted for a general strike in the entire lumber industry to take place on May 6 for a minimum wage of 75 cents an hour for unskilled labor and the 30-hour week*—the original demands that had been popularized by the N.L.W.U. The *Plywood and Veneer Workers*

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Union and the *Shingle Weavers Union* (both A. F. of L.) made similar decisions.

The reaction of some of the comrades in the N.L.W.U. towards this tremendously important Convention was to underestimate it completely, making no serious attempt to send a delegation to this Convention to propose unity, but instead clinging to the idea of "their own" Unity Conference planned for later in April. This, of course, went hand in hand with the old familiar line that "the A. F. of L. fakers will never really call a strike". This attitude showed not only that these comrades were completely isolated from the mass of the workers—in mood as well as organizationally—but also that they had learned nothing from the experiences of our Party in the general textile strike last fall and the quick and correct adaptations of policy made by our Central Committee in the few weeks immediately preceding the strike. Yet it would have been hard to imagine a situation to which the textile strike experiences were more directly applicable. In fairness to these comrades, however, it must be stated that in no case was it difficult to convince them of the correct policy, once the matter had been thoroughly explained.

At the root of the hesitation in practice towards merger with the A. F. of L. lay the idea that here in the Pacific Northwest, and especially in the lumber industry, the I.W.W. traditions of general hatred and distrust of the A. F. of L. were so strong that extreme caution had to be used in proceeding on this question. Of course the comrades were quite correct in taking the specific peculiarities of their field into account in applying the general Party policy, but it is quite evident that they had been listening a little to much to the voice of the old Wobbly "radicals" and not enough to the workers *actually employed* in the mills and camps. The supposed "strong distrust of the A. F. of L." vanished into thin air before the tremendous drive of the workers for unity, and later in the strike it appeared in its true form as distrust *of the misleaders* and support of the Rank-and-File Strike Committee.

The question was raised, however, in the second week of the strike that the Party District Bureau had made "a tremendous mistake" in not calling on the rank-and-file forces to organize a struggle against affiliation of the A. F. of L. lumber unions to the Carpenters' International, in view of the fact that this affiliation had the object of preventing the organization of a Lumber Workers International and of tieing the workers hand-and-foot through saddling them with the corrupt class-collaborationist leadership of the Carpenters' Executive.

It is true that the District Bureau should at once have obtained a mass of material on the previous sellouts and treacheries of the

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Carpenters' top machine, especially Abe Muir, their Pacific Coast representative; it should immeditaely have begun arming the workers with facts for the struggle that the Party was already guiding between the rank and file and this corrupt leadership. But the argument that we should have called for a struggle against the affiliation is based upon the type of mechanical tactics that would have led the Party to isolation.

In the first place, owing to the ideology previously discussed, the Party had not been alert in general to the problems of the A. F. of L. lumber unions, with the result that we had practically nobody in the locals and nobody at the Convention where affiliation had been unanimously voted. Secondly, the Party and the N.L.W.U. had placed in the forefront of their program the question of unity of all lumber unions. Clearly the workers who voted for affiliation did so because they saw affiliation with the Carpenters as the simplest and most immediate method of securing this unity, especially since they did not feel ready to struggle against the decision of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L.

Upon what grounds could we have opposed the Convention decision? Should we raise the principles that unity should not be a merger carried through by top officials, and that it should be unity for struggle? But this unity was actually *voted by mass conventions* and *the same conventions voted for a general strike!* For 75 cents an hour minimum (a 50 per cent to 75 per cent increase) and the 30-hour week! If we had continued to oppose the affiliation, would not the workers have looked upon us as a danger to unity? Would they not have said: "You see, the Reds talk about unity and struggle, but now that we have decided for unity and struggle they don't want it. It's clear that unless you do things just the way they want and give them control they keep fighting you." Finally, what practical slogan could the Party have raised after the Convention had taken place? Cancel the affiliation? Break away from the Carpenters? It is clear that this would have been a policy of splitting and virtual suicide.

It should also be mentioned that in this affiliation the Carpenters International was forced to leave the lumber unions almost complete autonomy. The locals retained their own scales of dues and initiations. The unions retained their own Northwest Councils. The locals retained their direct representation to all Central Labor Councils. Thus the lumber unions were by no means handed over to the Carpenters International officials to run as they saw fit. The militancy and class consciousness of the lumber workers made this impossible.

The final step towards unity was taken at the Unity Conference

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called by the N.L.W.U. late in April at which the N.L.W.U. announced it was sending its members into the A. F. of L. unions to help build them and win the strike, and called on other independent unions to do the same.

HOW THE STRIKE CALL WAS CARRIED INTO EFFECT

The lumber strike was an example of the increasing radicalization of the workers in the basic industries. The tremendous strike sentiment was an outgrowth of the intolerable conditions in the mills and camps. Forty-two and a half cents to 45 cent an hour was the standard wage for unskilled workers. Speed-up was increasing beyond all bounds. The standard safety precautions of the logging and sawmill trades were being neglected and violated wholesale. Every year the forest fires take an unrecorded toll. In the mills old saws without adequate guards and similar defective equipment driven at excess speeds cause numerous "accidents". Added to these conditions, the company blacklist (the "clearing house"), working together with the hated 4 L's, served as a constant threat to condemn to starvation any man who might protest. Many times since 1917 the lumber workers had been moved towards strike action, but now for the first time they felt themselves sufficiently united. For the first time, inspired by the militant struggles throughout the country, and especially by the great West Coast marine strike, they felt that they could actually win the victory and establish union conditions.

Of course, long before May 6, Muir was already playing the part of a strikebreaker, doing everything to head off the strike, finally announcing that all companies with which there was any indication that they might agree to enter into negotiations for arbitration were not to be called out. But the strike swept over the head of Muir and his "negotiations". In the week before May 6, the Bellingham mills struck as well as some important logging camps near Portland and near Aberdeen. On May 6, Portland, Everett and Tacoma went out. In Aberdeen, action was postponed for a special meeting in the evening at which Muir's officials argued and pleaded with the workers not to go out, but their pleas were swept aside and the next day the whole Grays Harbor territory (Aberdeen, Hoquiam, etc.) was out 100 per cent. The next day the Seattle mills came out despite Muir's opposition. Every important center was now out except Longview.

The Party had raised the slogan of organizing flying squadrons and everywhere the Party forces, weak as they were, played a leading role in turning the tide against "postponements" and in favor of immediate strike. In Portland they were instrumental in spreading the strike, in Tacoma they spread it to three important mills that had been exempted by Muir; in Aberdeen, besides the mills, they were

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especially responsible for organizing and striking the loggers; in Seattle the first picket lines were organized by rank-and-file lumber workers together with the members of the Unemployed Citizens' League and the Party.

For a few days it seemed as if Longview, the site of the two biggest mills in the world—the Weyerhaeuser and Long-Bell—would play the same role as Lawrence in the textile strike—the one most important center that failed to come out. Longview had been selected by Muir as his headquarters—undoubtedly not just for geographical convenience but because it is a small company town, long known for its terrorist regime, where the chief of police and deputy sheriff are both members of the union. Longview was likewise the home of the 4 L's.

The whole first week of the strike Muir remained in Longview, devoting all his energy towards keeping the Longview workers from striking. The Party decided in this particular case not to raise immediately the slogan of a flying squadron for Longview, as, in the absence of forces working effectively from within, it might have been possible in this company town for the millowners to organize an armed attack of company thugs upon the squadron, somewhat similar to Ambridge. The Party therefore advised the rank-and-file strikers in Portland to send a delegation to feel out the sentiment of the Longview workers. The Portland strikers were admitted to the meeting of the Longview local that evening. After Muir had spoken for two hours, the chairman called for discussion. One of the Portland men was given the floor, but before he had finished the first utterly innocent sentence, the chairman began pounding with his gavel and the striker was *placed under arrest by the brother deputy sheriff within the union meeting and taken out to jail!* This was a bit too much for the workers. During the night the Party succeeded in getting a leaflet into the mills exposing the fact that Muir's "negotiations" were for a 50 cent wage instead of the union demand of 75 cents! The next day the Weyerhaeuser mill struck and before the first week was over, Longview was out 100 per cent.

The strike had thus become practically complete in the entire Northwest (Pacific Fir Belt) with the exception of the southern Oregon territory (centering around Klamath Falls) and of the eastern Washington and northern Idaho logging camps (western pine). These latter territories never came out. Eureka, Cal., however, struck with the rest. About 40,000 workers were now involved, under the banner of the three unions.*

* Muir did succeed, however, in putting across his 50 cent agreement in the important McCormick Mill at St. Helens, Ore. Two other mills of the McCormick Company at Port Ludlow and Port Gamble, Wash., also failed to come out.

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An outstanding characteristic of the strike was the splendid solidarity of the longshoremen. The West Coast longshoremen, as is characteristic with workers in a basic industry who have just established union conditions through militant struggle, had already been giving examples of helping workers in other industries to organize. At the convention of the Pacific Coast Maritime Federation held late in April in Seattle and at the District (West Coast) Convention of the I.L.A. held May 5 in Portland, decisions had been passed to handle *no scab lumber!*

In many cases the longshoremen cooperated actively on the picket lines. The Party called upon them not only to help, but to give the lumber strikers the benefit of their experience from the marine strike last year, pointing out that victory could be won only if the lumber workers kicked out Muir and the other misleaders, as the longshoremen had done with Ryan. Just as the Carpenters' Executive "lent" Abe Muir to the lumber unions to sell them out, so the Everett longshoremen unofficially lent one of their best strike leaders, Harry Pilcher, Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the Central Labor Council, to the lumber unions, where he was of inestimable value in advising and guiding the local rank-and-file strike committee, and later the Joint Northwest Strike Committee.

THE STRUGGLE FOR RANK-AND-FILE CONTROL

The strike had a powerful weapon in the form of the militant Northwest labor weekly, the *Voice of Action.* This paper was started three years ago by popular subscription and volunteer labor at the height of the unemployed mass movement in Seattle as the organ of the Unemployed Citizens League, which later affiliated to the National Unemployment Council. From its start the paper has been edited by Lowell Wakefield, well-known in Seattle as one of the local Party leaders. Today the paper is not the official organ of any organization, but is published by a Committee of A. F. of L. trade unionists (including representatives of the unemployed). This change in sponsorship, as well as the increase in size and simultaneous improvement of the contents, brought about an increase in circulation from 2,500 on January 1 to 5,500 immediately before the strike. During the strike the circulation rose to 12,000. The popularity of the paper is shown by the fact that when the bureaucrats of the Allied Printing Trades Council, in the course of the lumber strike, tried to deny the paper the union label on account of its "revolutionary content", the paper successfully appealed openly to the membership of the printing trades and other unions. The Council received numerous resolutions from other unions, and every printing trade union without exception instructed its delegates to the Council to grant the label. The label was granted forthwith.

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From the beginning of the strike and even before, the *Voice of Action* was the most powerful instrument in bridging the gap caused by the isolation of the militant elements, acting as the voice of the rank and file, and organizing the forces of the rank and file to take the strike into their own hands and kick out Muir and his strike-breaking crew.

This had now become the decisive question of the strike. In some centers rank-and-file strike committees had been elected at the mass membership meetings of the unions, which either worked with the Executive Boards or included in their make-up most of the Executive Boards and the local officials together with a majority of rank-and-file strikers. In other centers where the local officials were more closely connected with Muir's machine, and where the rank-and-file forces were weak, the officials were able to prevent the election of strike committees and limit the leadership to themselves and the old Executive Board (in many cases appointed in the days when the union had a skeleton membership). While not all the 40,000 strikers had paid initiation and became members of the unions, nevertheless all felt themselves represented by the unions. The rank-and-file strike committees were not bodies *outside* the union, but were definitely looked upon as organs *of* the union, not in conflict with the constitution of the union. They were elected by the striking members in order to broaden the leadership for the purpose of the struggle and to insure the most direct contact between the leadership and the rank and file so that the will of the rank and file to struggle and win victory should be carried through. While the local strike committees to a certain extent supplied rank-and-file leadership on a local scale, nowhere, however, was there any central authority representing the rank and file throughout the whole strike area. The appeal of the Party and of the *Voice of Action* to call a conference of elected delegates to set up a Joint Northwest Strike Committee had not yet been taken up.

In the fourth week of the strike, Muir, feeling his control definitely slipping, called a conference in Longview, where he again proposed instead of the 75 cents an hour and the 30-hour week, *50 cents an hour, a 40-hour week and "union recognition" without closed shop.* His proposals were overwhelmingly defeated, but Muir gave out the news to the entire capitalist press that the proposal had been *accepted* and everyone was going back to work next Monday. Only the *Voice of Action* printed the true story.

But Muir had reckoned without the growing initiative of the rank and file. The Everett delegates at Longview on their own initiative at once arranged for a small number of militant delegates from other centers to meet with them in Everett the next day.

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Faced with the danger of immediate sell-out, this conference issued a call for a mass delegated conference to take place in Aberdeen within five days to set up a Joint Northwest Strike Committee and defeat the sell-out.

Meanwhile Muir placed his proposal before the Longview local. It was overwhelmingly defeated. Muir then took a vote on the question of whether they wanted to stay in the union. The strikers voted "Yes" by a nine to one vote. "Very well," said Muir, "that means you go back to work." He then ordered the removal of all pickets and read an instruction from the Carpenters' International Executive, ordering them back to work, under penalty of losing their charter. Muir then announced to the press that the Longview workers had voted nine to one to return to work.

That week-end marked the first turning-point in the strike. Throughout the Northwest Muir sent his orders to return to work regardless of conditions, under pain of expulsion and revocation of charters. The Party countered with a leaflet which reached every center in thousands of copies, exposing the sell-out, Muir's false reports, etc., and calling for extra large mass picket lines and election of delegates to the Aberdeen Conference. Meanwhile Everett and Aberdeen strike committees and rank-and-file forces were sending delegations of strikers in every direction to secure election of delegates to the Conference. At the same time the Northwest Council of the Shingle Weavers Union at its official quarterly meeting in Port Angeles voted to stand firm for the original demands, to endorse the Aberdeen Conference and to replace the pickets at Longview. A motion to demand from the Carpenters' International the immediate removal of Muir lost by one vote.

Very characteristic was the reaction on both sides to the Supreme Court decision on the N.R.A. which came just at that time. The N.R.A. had in truth played only a small *direct* role in the lumber industry. The bosses, proud of their long-lived 4 L company union, felt that the N.R.A. had nothing to offer them on that score. The lumber code was one of the last to be formulated, and only a couple of weeks before the strike, the Government announced it was dropping the prosecution of the lumber code test case. The Secretary of the West Coast Lumbermen's Association, interviewed on the Supreme Court decision, said it made no difference anyway, as the code had never been enforced in the lumber industry. But Muir improved upon this careless answer. While William Green in the East was issuing his demagogic threats of general strike, Muir used the decision as a reason for breaking the general strike of the lumber workers. "*Wages will go down unless we give the strongest support to the decent employers against the chiselers*", said Muir, and "*the*

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only way wage standards can be maintained is at once to put these plants in operation." Thus in the midst of a general strike for a 50 per cent increase in wages, Muir demanded that the workers rush back to work in order to throw themselves upon the mercy of the "decent employers" *to maintain the present wage standard!*

The Party, in reply, pointed out in its leaflet and in numerous mass meetings that nowhere in the country were the workers in such a splendid position to defeat the wage-cut drive that would come in the wake of the Supreme Court decision, as here in the Northwest where the lumber workers were *already out on general strike* with the organized support of the marine workers.

On Monday Muir announced the strike was at an end. The press reported: "Thousands return to work". In reality, no one returned and the papers had to admit next day that the mills which opened in joyous anticipation had again closed their doors "thwarted by Communist agitators". For a day or two the decision in Longview hung in the balance. Finally the workers decided not to go past the Shingle Weavers' pickets and the mills again closed down. The meaning was clear. Everywhere Muir had been rejected. The strike was ready for a new leadership and all eyes were centered on the Aberdeen Conference taking place the next day.

THE ABERDEEN RANK-AND-FILE CONFERENCE

The rank-and-file forces had estimated that if the Conference had 150 delegates (elected roughly on the basis of one to every hundred strikers) it could consider it had adequate authority to take over control of the strike. Actually there were 240 delegates, with additional observers bringing the number up to 400. The delegates were elected by local strike committees, local union meetings, and other official bodies, local executives, etc. All three unions were well represented as was practically every important center.

The success in bringing together such an authoritative conference in five days despite absolute secrecy in the capitalist press and threats of expulsion and revocation of charters by Muir was due not only to the correct policy of the Party, especially the correct *timing* of slogans, and the work of the fractions despite their weakness, but chiefly to the method adopted by the Everett strikers of sending strikers' delegations everywhere as a means of organizing rank-and-file sentiment and forces. This method of workers' delegations, which is spreading generally on the Coast, shows a high degree of mass initiative, and surpasses practically all other means in effectiveness. But despite their bold initiative, the Everett Conference could not quite convince themselves of the actual complete union legality and constitutionality of the steps they were taking in calling the

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Aberdeen Conference. For this reason they clung to the idea of secrecy in their proceedings. While it was possible to convince them of the importance of a large conference in Aberdeen instead of a small restricted one, they could not be prevailed upon to give their preparations wide publicity through leaflets and the press so as to aid in securing an adequate delegation and wide mass support. Consequently this burden devolved upon the Party, with the result that the Party leaflet was snapped up by the strikers as never before.

It was at this stage that the I.W.W. took its official position in the struggle. They issued a leaflet in Aberdeen *declaring themselves neutral* in "this internal struggle within the corrupt A. F. of L." The only salvation lay in "joining the Industrial Union of the I.W.W." By this position, its splitting tactic and its refusal to support the rank and file against the corruption of A. F. of L. bureaucrats, the Wobbly "radicals" definitely showed their complete divorce from the militant workers.

The Aberdeen Conference adopted, practically unanimously, virtually the entire rank-and-file program. Yet as a result of our Comrades' failure to fight the Red scare adequately in the various centers and thus overcome the lag of the strikers' conscious understanding of the broader issues of the strike behind that of the most immediate issues, the Conference refused to give the floor to the editor of the *Voice of Action* or in any way to give official support to the paper that was the only voice of the strike. The reactionaries among the delegates were aided in this by the Red scare speech of a lawyer who was present as an adviser from the *Pacific Coast Labor Bureau*, an outfit which later played a more open strikebreaking role.

The Conference elected a Joint Northwest Strike Committee with a good working majority of honest militant strikers. O. Smith of Olympia, the Chairman of the Northwest Council of the Plywood and Veneer Workers Union, was elected chairman of the Strike Committee, and Max Barnett, of the Sawmill and Timber Workers Union of Everett, Secretary-Treasurer. The reaction on the part of the bosses to the Aberdeen Conference was immediate. Recognizing that the strike was no longer in Muir's hands to sell out upon order, Governor Martin of Washington issued his statement calling upon the State Police to "protect the right to work" and to arrest Communist leaders and agitators. Faced with immediate protest, however, and doubtless remembering the recall movement against Mayor Smith of Seattle, last fall, the Governor showed no great haste actually to proceed with wholesale attacks.

WEAKNESSES OF THE STRIKE COMMITTEE

The first and most important task before the Strike Committee now was immediately to send strong delegations to every important

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strike center, go before the local union meetings and before joint mass meetings of all strikers, secure the official repudiation of Muir, the acceptance of the Joint Northwest Strike Committee as the sole leadership in the strike, strengthen, or, where necessary, help the rank and file to set up their local joint strike committees, and throw out their local bureaucrats and in this way consolidate rank-and-file control of the strike. But this task was carried out weakly and inadequately. The Strike Committee did not yet know how boldly to take things into its hands. The result was that while the Strike Committee was pretty widely accepted all over the Northwest as the *general* leadership of the strike, it did not have adequate local control. In general terms it might be said that the Strike Committee enjoyed a fairly solid base in Everett and Aberdeen (the latter the largest single strike center), was originally weak but grew in strength in Portland, Olympia and Longview, and at the beginning of July was still weak in Tacoma and Seattle.

Of course, it would be exceedingly stupid to blame the members of the Strike Committee for the weaknesses of the Committee. Here were a bunch of honest militant workers, most of whom four weeks previously on the eve of the strike were almost absolutely green, and who now found themselves thrust by their fellow-workers into a position of leadership of 40,000 strikers. In the first four weeks of the strike these workers had already learned a tremendous amount. The problem, however, of rapidly overcoming the weaknesses of new rank-and-file leadership in unions and training them in strike strategy is becoming of ever greater importance. Comrade Steuben, in his recent articles in the *Daily Worker* on the strategy of the Canton steel strike, gives an outstanding example. This problem becomes particularly critical in strikes in industries where the Party forces have previously been weak.

What was the basis of the weaknesses of the Strike Committee? First and foremost, that it did not yet understand that its whole power and strength came from the masses who were striving for victory in the strike. Because it did not quite understand that this is the *only* source of power in a strike that is to be conducted in the interests of the masses, it was hesitant in exercising with adequate boldness the mandate given it by the Aberdeen Conference to take over the entire leadership of the strike. Out of this also flowed the very dangerous idea of *secrecy*. This was not evidenced so much in the form of a tendency actually to conceal decisions and proceedings, etc., but rather as a refusal to make use of essential methods of publicity, statements to the press, strike bulletins, leaflets, notifications to the *Voice of Action*, etc., in giving necessary instructions to the strikers on steps to establish the leadership of the Strike Committee

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and in preparing actions. There was the unjustified feeling that somehow this would be going outside the regular trade union channels, whereas in reality these are essential methods of leading, informing and keeping in touch with the masses that are used in every strike. In addition, the tendency to secrecy took the form of failing in most centers to hold daily mass meetings of the strikers to organize their activities, to acquaint them with daily developments, with the decisions of the local strike committees, and for the Strike Committee thus to operate detached from the strikers. Out of such a method of work inevitably grows the danger, expressed very soon by the more backward or bureaucratic elements, that it isn't good for the strikers to know everything. "They should have confidence in the Strike Committee and not ask too many questions"—a position which of course plays directly into the hands of the misleaders.

But the worst and most dangerous outgrowth of the lack of faith in the masses is the Red scare. It is unnecessary to recapitulate here the manifold ways in which the fear of carrying out actions that may be characterized as "Red" or "Communist" distorts and paralyzes the development of a strike, and, if steadily persisted in, leads to a complete sell-out. The Red scare affects primarily not the "backward" worker, but rather the radicalized worker who is not well in touch with the moods of the masses, who therefore feels that his radicalization is an exception, and that to carry out the Party line would "spoil things" and who thus becomes the carrier of the Red scare. Unfortunately due to the sectarianism still existng among our comrades, in many places Party members themselves became the carriers of the Red scare.

One of the outstanding instances of the Red scare was the failure to push adequately the sale of the *Voice of Action* and to get it officially adopted and officially distributed by local strike committees and unions. The greatest efforts had to go into getting out and circulating the paper which was the only voice of the strike and was welcomed everywhere by the rank and file. Yet our fractions continually failed to make the strike and union apparatus an aid to the circulation of the paper. In several cases, Party units claimed that the paper "could not be sold to the ordinary strikers" and objected to substantial increases in bundles.

This is of special importance in exploding one of the arguments that used to be used in similar cases about the *Daily Worker*. It was argued that the *Daily Worker* could not be sold to the ordinary worker (or striker) because it carried on its front page the Hammer and Sickle and the words *"Central Organ of the C.P.U.S.A., Section of the Communist International"*. For this reason, supposedly, it could not be a "mass paper". Yet here the same type of

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argument was used against a paper that was *not* an organ of the Communist Party, or any other revolutionary organization, which carried no Hammer and Sickle, where the Communist Party does not express itself editorially, and which is published by a committee of A. F. of L. trade unionists. This shows that this argument is nonsense.

Out of an incorrect understanding of the relationship of the strike leadership to the masses grew also the error of "super-democracy"—the insistence that every insignificant matter must be referred to mass meetings or executive committees, creating wrangles over inessentials, cluttering up the time of these bodies so that they are unable to discuss the essential policies and actions, and thus defeating real democracy. Of course, this incorrect conception is very quickly seized upon by the reactionaries and used to hinder and delay the necessary actions in the strike, and especially the obtaining of finances, by insisting that everything must be deferred instead of being acted upon.

Most difficult of all for such a newly-developed leadership is the maintenance of real concentration, in policy as well as territorially. There is the continual tendency to avoid facing the hardest tasks, and to slide down into the handling of merely technical matters. It was largely this that was responsible for the failure to organize a really powerful protest campaign with delegations to the Governor from all quarters, immediately after Governor Martin's (of Washington) first announcement of his intentions to use violence. In addition, there was the constant tendency of some elements to avoid directly challenging Muir in the main centers where the Strike Committee was weak (Tacoma, Seattle, Longview, Portland) by discovering all sorts of important situations in minor places. While it was true that the dramatic arrests in Forest Grove, Ore., and Bridal Veil, Ore., were important and might have become important developments in the strike generally, they could in no way be compared with the attention required in the main centers where the strike would be actually decided.

Similarly, much precious time and attention was lost in discussion over getting out Port Ludlow and Port Gamble, two minor mills of the McCormick Co., under the slogan of spreading the strike. While the spreading of the strike is always important, and even small gains in this respect help to emphasize the ascending power of the strike, nevertheless this could not be looked upon as a decisive question at that time. If the remaining important area—southern Oregon—could have been gotten out, this could have had a decisive effect, but the addition of minor mills oculd not be decisive. At this stage, the decisive question in spreading the strike was to work for

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solidarity and support from other industries. And in this as well as in the other issues of the strike, the decisive question was completely to defeat and isolate Muir and his reactionaries and to consolidate and increase the militancy of the strike *in the most important strike centers.*

Another phase of concentration involved the relative importance of the crafts. At the beginning of the strike, there was a tendency among the loggers who enjoyed greater militancy, organizational and strike experience, in some cases to underestimate the fighting qualities of the sawmill workers who are for the most part a younger and much less experienced group. Involved in this was also the remnant of the old outlived antagonism between the migratory worker and the stationary town worker. While the danger of disunity never became important, it was necessary to point out to the loggers that precisely because they *were* more migratory and disconnected, and the sawmill workers were stationary, grouped in larger masses and located in the towns, that the backbone of the strike and of the union both during and after the strike would have to be the sawmill workers, and that it was therefore the task of the loggers and of all strikers to spread their experience and concentrate on developing rank-and-file leadership among the sawmill workers and in every important mill.

It is especially important that the rank-and-file forces become thoroughly acquainted with the constitutions of their unions. More and more, as in the lumber strike, the bureaucrats are attempting revocations of charters, expulsions, etc. In most cases, the rank-and-file leaders are not conscious of the fact that their activities are perfectly legal under their union constitutions and as a result their confidence and actions are often hampered by excessive caution and hesitancy. Many a time, the tide has been turned and the union membership has refused to be intimidated by threats of charter revocation, when it is shown that their militant actions have been perfectly constitutional, while the charter revocation is not. Needless to say, this use of the constitution cannot replace mass resistance, but it is a valuable aid in organizing such resistance, which the rank-and-file leaders must learn to make use of.

Hesitancy in boldly taking leadership was frequently expressed by Party members in the strike as well as by rank-and-file forces by the phrase that we were "putting them on the spot". By this they meant to imply that the Party was isolating them from the masses so that they would stand out alone. But clearly only an incorrect policy could have such a result. Of course, the carrying out of the correct Party policy would make these comrades stand out, but *as leaders*—not isolated from the masses but supported by them. And of course

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they would be "on the spot" in the sense that the bosses and the bureaucrats would center their attack upon them. But this is exactly the task of the Communists—to take such leadership and to withstand such attacks. These are the kind of cadres that our Party is striving so strenuously to develop.

Of course, it would be very foolish to exaggerate these errors and weaknesses of the rank-and-file leadership. In reality these forces were developing with remarkable speed. The problem of accelerating and guiding this development, of overcoming the shortcomings, however, is one of the central problems of the Party leadership in the course of a strike.

THE STRUGGLE FOR SOLIDARITY

Perhaps the weakest phase of the Party's activity in the strike lay in the field of securing an organized movement of solidarity in the A. F. of L. unions for the lumber strikers. At the very start of the strike, the perspective was highly probable, that in a strike of such scope, if the sell-out attempts of the misleaders were defeated, the lumber bosses would have the troops called out in an attempt to crush the strike by terror and martial law. In such a case, it would be necessary for the strikers in the main lumber centers to call out the reserves of labor—to call for a general strike in their cities—to repel the united attack of the forces of the capitalists (the government, the employers and the fascist "Committees of 500") in order to defend the democratic rights of labor and the whole population, forcing the withdrawal of the troops and martial law, and thus virtually assuring victory in their own strike.

Clearly, the moment when the basic industry of the territory was completely out on strike was also the most favorable moment for the workers in other industries and trades to organize, formulate their own demands, and strike if necessary, to secure them. A wide union organizational campaign at this moment would therefore, *first*, increase the chances of victories for the workers in the other industries; *second*, create a broad basis of solidarity for the lumber strikers and provide a fitting answer to the fascist open-shop forces such as the Committee of 500 that were already mobilizing against the strike and the entire labor movement; *third*, have the workers already in motion and struggling for *their own* demands, so that if a general strike situation was developed, there would be greater probability of success. In addition, such a union organizational drive, carried through with the united support of the Communist Party, the Commonwealth Builders and the Socialist Party, would provide the best basis and impetus toward building the united front movement for a Labor Party.

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However, this broad organizational campaign to make the cities into 100 per cent union towns, which the Party officially proposed to the A. F. of L. and the other political organizations, was not actually developed. In view of the mass indignation against the Committee of 500 in Seattle, the top bureaucrats of the Central Labor Council could not avoid making a formal decision to start an organizational drive, but, of course, they sabotaged the drive, and the rank-and-file forces were not strong enough and lacked the necessary confidence to become the spearhead of the drive themselves.

The Party also did not succeed in calling sufficiently broad solidarity conferences with rank-and-file representation from the other A. F. of L. unions so that authoritative action on the question of solidarity action and of general strike could be taken by a recognized representation of the rank-and-file of the unions, instead of being left in the hands of the top bureaucrats and their machines in the Central Labor Councils. This was primarily due to the weakness of the rank-and-file forces and the Party fractions in the striking locals themselves, as well as in the other unions.

In Tacoma, when the troops were called out, mass indignation rose to a high pitch. The slogan of general strike was raised by the Party and was on everybody's lips. Immediately, a special meeting of the Central Labor Council was called together by its chairman, Paddy Morriss, who is also District (West Coast) Secretary of the I.L.A., a skillful demagogue and spinner of radical phrases. Paddy Morriss was one of the outstanding strikebreakers in the marine strike last year, and when the struggle of the rank and file against Muir developed in the lumber strike and the charter was taken away from the local Sawmill and Timber Workers Union and placed in the custody of the Central Labor Council, Paddy Morriss refused to return it. As was to be expected under such misleadership, the Central Labor Council, instead of responding to the demand of the masses and issuing the call for general strike, employed the same trick that was used in other places last year and called upon the Federal government to send in Federal troops instead of the National Guard. Although two weeks previously, the Portland local of the Sawmill and Timber Workers Union had passed a resolution to call on the other Portland unions for general strike if troops would be called out in Portland, and the Everett Central Labor Council had decided to call a general strike if troops were brought into Everett, and although the strikers everywhere defended their picket lines and fought back against the troops with splendid militancy, nowhere were the rank-and-file forces strong enough actually to get the general strike carried into effect.

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At this moment Muir proceeded again to revoke charters in Longview, Aberdeen and Tacoma. This move failing to break the ranks, Muir resorted, after the workers had stood out for two whole weeks against the troops in Tacoma and Aberdeen, to splitting and reorganizing the locals on a mill and camp basis, calling repeated meetings with the bosses present, forcing his agreement upon the workers.

With the maneuvers of the misleaders cutting off the reserves of the strikers, the increasing terror hammering away at their resistance, and Muir disorganizing and splitting the locals and driving the workers back, the lumber bosses succeeded in recommencing operations. The high point of the strike had passed and the rank-and-file forces were correct in organizing retreat on the best possible terms in each center.

RESULTS, PERSPECTIVES, AND NEXT TASKS

The August *Monthly Guide* issued by the Party District gives the following estimate of the immediate gains of the strike:

> "At the present time there are tendencies which we must warn against—to view the heroic struggle of the lumber workers of the last 12 weeks as a defeat. We must emphatically reject such an estimate. . . . We can definitely state that fundamental gains were made through the strike, such as:
>
> 1. Small increases in pay (minimum 50 cents an hour) and a basic fixed week (40-hour week).
> 2. A mass labor union has been organized in the industry for the first time since 1917.
> 3. The backbone of the 4 L's has been broken."

The responsibility for the failure to win the full demands lies squarely on the shoulders of Muir and his gang of top officials, Paddy Morris of Tacoma and the other misleaders at the head of the Central Labor Councils.

The main danger at the present moment lies, of course, in the moods of disgust and tendencies towards breaking away from the union and from the A. F. of L. that always arise among the militant workers (and even among Party members) after a strike, where as a result of the treachery of the misleaders, adequate gains are not won. This danger becomes especially serious in view of the I.W.W. syndicalist traditions of the region, which naturally again come more strongly to the fore in such a situation. However, the Party District Committee is effectively combatting such tendencies, and centering all efforts on consolidating the unions within the A. F. of L. and continuing the struggle for rank-and-file control.

The probable immediate outlook is for a period of local struggles in the individual mills and camps to maintain the union and the conditions that have been won. The lumber bosses, who have ruled the industry since 1917 without any concern for unions, are not

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going to give in to the idea of a unionized industry—even though the 12-week strike taught them many a lesson. Even in the case of the marine strike last year, where the gains of the workers were more decisive and formal agreements were signed, numerous individual ship and dock strikes were required before the shipowners were finally willing to face the sad reality that they would have to live up to the agreements. In the coming struggles in the mills and camps to enforce the conditions gained, against specific grievances, and especially to enforce safety conditions, elected mill and camp committees of the union will prove the most valuable instruments, as they have done with the longshoremen. At the same time, the unions must draw the full lessons of the strike and the treachery of Muir and his gang. The Party and the rank-and-file forces must make a thorough analysis of the reasons why the full demands were not won, and in each center, in each local, the rank and file must organize its forces, fix the responsibility, clean out those officials who proved to be traitors, and place in the leadership of the union those who proved to be the most militant and best leaders in the strike.

The main tasks, then, now lie in the consolidation of the unions, in the struggle against the blacklist, in the continuing of struggles on the job for specific demands in the mills and camps, the building of rank-and-file groups, and recruiting into the Party, building functioning Party fractions. The Party, as a result of its activity and leadership given during the strike, has grown greatly in influence and prestige. While recruiting has lagged far behind the possibilities, nevertheless a number of excellent fighters among the lumber workers have been brought into the Party and many more can be undoubtedly brought in by persistent work and follow-up of the lessons of the strike by the Party units and Sections. In particular, the Party must concentrate on the building of a network of shop nuclei in the most important mills and camps, and strengthening the fractions in the local unions and leading committees, so that the Party will be able to maintain and strengthen its close contact with the masses of lumber workers. Special efforts must be made to develop all forces which have shown any capacity for leadership on a local or general scale.

The role that the Party played in the lumber strike shows that under the leadership of the District Committee the Party in the Seattle District has made tremendous strides in the past two years toward overcoming its previous history of extreme sectarianism, and that as a result of the marine strike last year and other struggles, the Party is now reaching a definite stage of political maturity and development. There is no question that if the Party in the Seattle District maintains and strengthens its base among both the marine and lumber workers, it will become more and more a decisive force in the leadership of the workers and farmers of the Pacific Northwest.

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Somebody Is "Distressed" — But Not Karl Marx

(*A Review of Earl Browder's "Communism in the United States"**)

By ROBERT MINOR

> "We have learned the revolutionary traditions of 1776 and 1863 and have appeared as the heirs of the revolutionary movements from which the United States was born"

—quotes Harold Denny, correspondent of the *New York Times*, in a dispatch from Moscow on July 29th, describing the proceedings of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. The quotation is from a speech of Earl Browder, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the United States. Mr. Denny becomes excited about Comrade Browder's words on "the revolutionary traditions of 1776 and 1863", and pronounces the speech to be:

> "A peroration that probably would be equally distressing to Karl Marx, the Daughters of the American Revolution and the veterans of the Confederacy."

* * *

When the Seventh World Congress opened and forecasted from its first day the advanced position it would take upon the central question of the united front, the entire capitalist press floundered in amazement and confusion. The same correspondent quoted above had cabled four days earlier:

> "The Communist International in *a remarkable change of front* has decided to cast its lot with the more moderate elements in capitalistic countries in order to combat the growing menace of fascism. . . .
>
> "Thus *the theme of world revolution, for which the Communist International was established, is pushed into the background for the time being.*" (My emphasis.)

Shortly after the appearance of the last-quoted cablegram in the *Times*, I had occasion to talk business with a sympathizer—a

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very good fellow—who makes use of his rather high position in the bourgeois world to lend a hand now and then to the labor movement. He had taken the dispatches of the capitalist newspaper correspondents at face value and was troubled. The Communist International had gone to the Right. No more revolution now! Foster and Browder, yes—and Stalin and Dimitroff—had by unfavorable circumstances been compelled to surrender the revolution to the bourgeoisie!

"It's a pity," said my professional friend in great sadness, "but I'll do my part".

* * *

Norman Thomas also is distressed by the "confusion in program and purpose" of the Communist International and the "extreme opportunism" of the Communist Party! And one of the smaller splinterlets off of the Lovestone splinter of renegades goes into mourning with the lament:

> "The Communist International is headed unwaveringly toward liquidation. The Seventh Congress will go down in history of the movement as the funeral congress of the Communist International."

There certainly is a lot of distress. But let us see whether this distress would have been shared by Karl Marx.

* * *

First on the question of American traditions. We happen to recall another newspaper correspondent for a New York newspaper —and a much better correspondent if Mr. Denny will pardon us for saying so—who sent dispatches from London away back in those turbulent times when some of the starkest American traditions were being hammered out of the red-hot iron of civil war. That correspondent wrote from London in January, 1862, to the *New York Tribune:*

> "It ought never to be forgotten in the United States that at least the *working classes* of England, from the commencement to the termination of the difficulty, have never forsaken them. . . . In ordinary circumstances, the conduct of the British workingmen might have been anticipated from the natural sympathy the popular classes all over the world ought to feel for *the only popular government in the world.*" (*New York Tribune*, Feb. 1, 1862. My emphasis.)

This correspondent was none other than Karl Marx, who at that time was struggling to keep alive on less than $5.00 a week by writing for the *New York Tribune* while engaged in furious activity in stirring up a wide mass movement of the British work-

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ing class in support of what was *then* "the only popular government in the world"—Abraham Lincoln's war government against slavery.

It was Marx who wrote also, in November, 1864, the Address of the International Workingmen's Association to a man whom he described as "the single-minded son of the working class"—Abraham Lincoln:

> "We congratulate the American people upon your re-election by a large majority. If resistance to the Slave Power was the watch-word of your first election, the triumphal war-cry of your re-election is Death to Slavery. . . ."

Neither did Lenin hesitate to advise the British workers to study the great revolutionary traditions of Cromwell's time and the American workers to claim as their own the revolutionary traditions of America. In August, 1918, in the midst of the World War and when American troops were "strangling the Russian Socialist Republic", Lenin wrote his *Letter to American Workers*, not only emphasizing "American revolutionary traditions", but pointing out that these traditions are and must be "*adopted by the best representatives of the American proletariat*" and these glorious traditions *are consistent only with "full solidarity with us, the Bolsheviks"*. To quote:

> "The American people has a revolutionary tradition adopted by the best representatives of the American proletariat, who gave repeated expression to their full solidarity with us, the Bolsheviks. This tradition is the war of liberation with the English in the eighteenth and the Civil War in the nineteenth century."

And Lenin denounced as "a pedant" and "an idiot" anyone who on certain grounds would dispute this claim.

When Browder at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, in rightfully claiming the revolutionary traditions of America, thereby claimed precisely the revolutionary traditions of Marxism, of Leninism, and the world-revolutionary movement of the proletariat, *somebody* has cause to be "distressed". But we hardly think it would be the great founder of the Communist Party, Karl Marx. More likely it is the misnamed "Daughters of the American Revolution" and the spiritual heirs of Jefferson Davis that are now maneuvering to murder the nine innocent boys of Scottsboro and to fasten the heroic young Negro revolutionary leader Angelo Herndon in the leg irons of the Georgia chain-gang.

* * *

If the bourgeois press wishes to see in the actions of the Seventh World Congress "a remarkable change of front", we can in rough

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terms say that this is precisely what a world congress of the Communist International is for—when there is a remarkable change in the situation of the world. But this remarkable change, this advanced position of the Seventh Congress, is taken, not because the theme of world revolution is pushed into the background, but because, as never before, the world revolution of the proletariat and of the enslaved colonial and semi-colonial peoples is rapidly *moving forward* into the very foreground of present-day history!

But before the middle of the World Congress a reverse form of consternation seized the gentlemen of the bourgeois press. They who had wistfully speculated on a vanishing of the revolutionary party and program rediscovered with re-amazement that the Communist Party is the revolutionary party of the American working class! After the discussion at the Congress on the subject of the Pacific Coast, the capitalist press became groggy. William "Adolph" Hearst's *New York Evening Journal* of July 31 said:

> "Anybody who thinks that Communism's war on America and American institutions is mere 'hot air' should heed the report of Earl Browder, general secretary of the American Communist Party, to the Congress of the Communist International now in session in Moscow.
>
> "Browder reveals, with no small pride, these facts:
>
> "1. Since 1930 the Communist Party in the United States has tripled in size. Its *enrolled* membership now numbers 30,000.
>
> "2. In 1930 less than 10 per cent of its members were native born. Now the percentage of native born is more than 40.
>
> "3. The party has more than 500 'nuclei', made up of 4,000 members, in factories and plants which employ a total of more than 1,000,000.
>
> "4. Communist agitators have fomented many large strikes and claim 'credit' in particular for the San Francisco general strike.
>
> "5. The party is actively proselyting among young people through the Young Communist League and other youth movements.
>
> "Browder makes no bones about the fact that the Reds here are attempting to revolution."

And Arthur Brisbane sadly remarked:

> "Representatives of Communism in the United States have certainly not been idle."

* * *

Now, we have before us an instrument for further disillusionment of those who like to dream of a decline in the revolutionary party of the American workers. It is the book of Earl Browder, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the United States of America, under the title *Communism in the United States*. This book exposes the meat and bone of the development of the Com-

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munist Party and its policies during the period from May, 1932, until the weeks preceding the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. It is composed of the most significant speeches, articles and excerpts from discussions by the man who has stood at the head of the Communist Party during the past three stormy years of the struggles and the development of the policies of the Communist Party of this country. For anyone who wishes really to understand the historical development in America, which necessarily *had* to precede and lead up to the present outcome in the results of the Seventh Congress, this book is of irreplacable value.

It would be no service to the truth, nor to the Party, nor to Comrade Browder for anyone to say that the contents of this book are identical with the content of the decisions of the Seventh Congress which followed it. What was written prior to the Congress can at best serve as a record of development toward the Congress' conclusions. The worst political error would be to assume that the great Seventh World Congress of the Communist International has not marked a decisive change in the tactics of the Communist Parties and the labor movement of the entire world. A world congress of the Communists is not a "harmless palaver" nor (as the bourgeois press and the Trotskyist counter-revolutionaries would have it) an occasion for manouvering by divergent class interests contending for dominance. It is the instrument used by the revolutionary leading forces of the world mutually to hammer out *scientifically* the general line of a single and inseparable world movement which has no divergent interests. It would be worse than stupid to imagine that "nothing happens" in regard to our formulations and analyses, that what we have to say and do "remains the same" after such a Congress as before it. In such case such a World Congress would be useless. And the Seventh World Congress more than any other since the foundation of the Communist International marks a profound change, meeting a profoundly changed world situation, that will affect the whole course of human history.

But this book is the living record of the development of the policies and thought of "one of those few Communist Parties in the world upon which history has laid tasks of a decisive character from the point of view of the world revolutionary movement", written by the man who more than any other had a creative part in this development during these years.*

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* Stalin. Speech delivered in the American Commission of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I., May 6, 1929.

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And it would be a stupid form of "modesty" if we did not realize that our own American section of the Communist International played its own not unimportant part in making possible the magnificent results of our World Congress.

* * * *

In the light of that Congress we must appreciate what has been accomplished by our Party (and more important!—what our Party must still accomplish!) in blasting away the myth of the "alien" nature of the day-to-day struggle of the Communists among the masses and the "alien" nature of Communism and the Socialist revolution. It is in uneasy realization that we are doing something of this that causes Hearst each day more hysterically to shout that the Communist Party represents

> "an alien slave-form of social organization conceived in the brain of Asiatic barbarians."

The best of Browder's genius is shown in his popular manner of doing this:

> "The capitalists and their agents shriek out that this revolutionary program is un-American. But this expresses, not the truth, but only their own greedy interests. Today, the only party that carries forward the revolutionary traditions of 1776 and 1861, under the present-day conditions and relationship of classes, is the Communist Party. Today, only the Communist Party finds it politically expedient and necessary to remind the American working masses of how, in a previous crisis, the way out was found by the path of revolution. Today, only the Communist Party brings sharply forward and applies to the problems of today that old basic document of 'Americanism', the Declaration of Independence." (Earl Browder, *Communism in the United States* p. 18.)
>
> "Americans have always been able to solve a basic crisis by revolutionary means. In 1776 we smashed the fetters of reactionary feudal rule by the European absentee landlord. In 1861 we smashed the feudal remnants of Negro slavery. With the same resolute and revolutionary determination we must, in 1933, turn to the task of smashing the oppressive and destructive rule of the Wall Street monopolist capitalists who have brought our country to the brink of destruction. *'If that be treason, make the most of it!'* " (p. 174).
>
> "We are not un-American! . . . The United States was born in revolutionary struggle. It was born in the confiscation of the private property of the feudal landlords. That good old American tradition of revolution is today kept alive *only* by the Communist Party. We are the only true Americans. The Republican, Democratic and Socialist Parties are all renegade to the basic American tradition of revolution" (p. 173-74).

We think Browder is surely doing something else than putting

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the Revolution on the shelf when he explains in simple language of the street and factory that:

> "The principle which must provide the foundation of the 'new government' mentioned in the Declaration of Independence is, in 1934, the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat; the new form is the form of the workers' and farmers' councils—the Soviet power. The 'new guards for their future security', which the workers must establish, are the installing of the working class in every position of power, and the dissolution of every institution of capitalist class rule" (p. 19).

And when he leads down to concrete terms:

> "Such a government would immediately begin to reorganize the present anarchic system of production along socialist lines. It woud eliminate the untold waste of capitalism; it would bring to full use the tremendous achievements of science, which have been pushed aside by the capitalist rulers from consideration of private profit. Such a socialist reorganization of industry would almost immediately double the existing productive forces of the country. Such a revolutionary government would secure to the farmers the possession of their land and provide them with the necessary means for a comfortable living; it would make it possible for the farming population to unite their forces in a cooperative socialist agriculture, and thus bring to the farming population all the advantages of modern civilization, and would multiply manifold the productive capacities of American agriculture" (p. 19).

It is well known that the Communist Party of the United States has recently and shortly before the World Congress taken a position for the formation, under the present situation in America, of a Labor Party. The policy of formation of a Labor Party was rounded out at the World Congress and its much more developed form expressed by Comrade Dimitroff:

> "In the United States our comrades strive to create as a linking organization an anti-fascist People's Front, a workers and farmers' Labor Party, which is neither Socialist nor Communist, but is unconditionally anti-fascist and by no means anti-Communist."

This is not the first time the Communist Party in the United States advocated the formation of a Labor Party. But conditions changed, and for a number of years the Labor Party "as a practical mass question, had passed into the background". In 1928 at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, the formulation that was unanimously accepted as covering this question was made by Stalin as follows:

> "On the question of the organizing of a Labor Party, the Congress resolves: That the (Communist) Party concentrate its attention on the work in the trade unions, on organizing the unor-

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ganized, etc., and in this way lay the basis for the practical realization of the slogan of a broad Labor Party organized from below." (Resolution of Sixth Congress.)

Now, Browder says:

"The events of 1934 begin to place this question in a new light. Mass disintegration of the old two-party system has begun. . . . We Communists . . . seek to make the break with the old parties mean a break with the bourgeoisie, we seek to lead these masses into the path of class struggle, to break the power of the class-collaboration leadership, to bring the working class face to face with the problem of State power, the problem of which class shall wield this power" (Browder, *Communism in the United States*, pp. 284-85).

But "a broad Labor Party organized from below" could be realized only on the basis mainly of the *trade unions*, and if this is realizable now, it is because much ground has been laid by the work and the strength of the Communist Party in the unions. And this ground *could* not be laid in Bolshevik work among the masses and in the mass organizations of the working class until some sharp and deep changes were made within the Communist Party itself.

"In 1930, at the Seventh Convention, our Party had just emerged from a long period of relative stagnation and even retrogression, resulting from protracted inner Party factional struggles, and the domination of the opportunist policies of the Lovestone leadership. The Seventh Convention consolidated the unification of the Party, confirmed the throwing off of the opportunists, and turned the Party resolutely towards the correct Bolshevik policy of mass struggles and mass organization." (*Ibid*, p. 65.)

As Earl Browder has been throughout the life of the Communist Party of the United States one of the foremost (to say the least) in the development of its trade union policy, it is inevitable that the trade union policy, "basic to all our work," finds a most important place and authoritative statement in Browder's book. In the past two years, profound changes in the situation in the country and in the labor movement have necessitated sharp and deep-going alterations in the tactics of the Communist Party. And every time there is a change of tactics, there are little groups of renegades, riff-raff cast off from the Communist movement at one time or another when the sharpening struggle broke down the weaker elements in the Party, eager to seize hold of the fact of a change of policy to shout "See! The Party was wrong! It changes its policy—a confession that the old policy was wrong!" Such speculators, standing on the fringes of the labor movement, cynical, without principle, ready to sell for a penny of profit any political rags, bones or old iron for which they can find a credulous worker or group of workers, become the most dangerous agents of the bourgeoisie. These typical products of

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petty-bourgeois confusion and demoralization are an inevitable result of the sharp collisions of class struggle between the two main classes of present society—the rising revolutionary proletariat and the reactionary, decaying, but powerful bourgeoisie. At every sharp turn some such broken and rotten elements are shaken off of the revolutionary party when their courage or clarity of principle fail them. Of course, the prototype is the renegade Trotsky, who does a counter-revolutionary brokerage-business partly by labelling each and every tactical change of the revolutionary movement "another zig-zag", and who has his little bucket-shops in this and other countries, at which it is always possible for an employer, hard-pressed by a Communist-led strike, to find a strike-breaker who knows how to wear the false label "Communist".

Because workers who are untrained in revolutionary tactics but who are groping toward the revolutionary movement are the usual prey of these vultures, it is necessary to carry on a tireless explanation of the tactics of the Party to the mass of workers.

Browder's book, containing reports and speeches as far back in date as May, 1932, covers the field of trade union policy before as well as after the biggest recent tactical changes were made. The historic value of the statement of policies of the earlier stage is not lost, but is enhanced by the placing of the older statement within the same cover with the newer statement. Browder says:

> "We have made important changes in our trade union tactics in the course of 1934. The general direction of these changes has been clear to the Party from the beginning. It consisted in a shift of emphasis away from the independent organization to the work within the larger mass organization, in the American Federation of Labor. It is clear, the forces which predetermined this shift were the influx of many hundreds of thousands of new workers from the basic industries into the A. F. of L. unions and the growing radicalization of the old membership in the reformist unions.
>
> "These factors opened up new and greater possibilities of mass work within the larger reformist unions, opened up a field which had not existed for several years. . . . We are now able to say very clearly and definitely that the main task of the party in the sphere of trade union work must be the work in the A. F. of L., so as to energetically and tirelessly mobilize the masses of their members in the trade unions as a whole for the defense of the everyday interests, the development of the policy of class struggle in the mass unions of the A. F. of L., fighting on the basis of trade union democracy, for the independent leadership of these struggles in spite of the sabotage and treachery of the reformist bureaucrats" (*Ibid*, p. 208).

"Aha!" cry the renegades of the Right and the "Left", "this is quite different from what you told us only a few months ago! We

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said all along that you should chuck everything else and work only in the A. F. of L. in harmony with the 'legitimate leaders' of the trade union movement. Why don't you admit that we were right and the Party wrong?"

But the line of the Party was *not* wrong when, under the previous *different* situation, the main emphasis was placed in the building of the revolutionary unions. (This is not to deny the many weaknesses and mistakes we made in carrying out the Party's line.) As to "the historical justification of the revolutionary independent unions" Browder correctly says:

> "They proved themselves in class struggle as necessary instruments without which we could never have had the present situation of great advance within the A. F. of L. And also at this moment, the independent revolutionary unions have a great role to play in the fight for the general unification of the trade union movement and for the establishment of class struggle policies within the A. F. of L.
>
> "The revolutionary unions which have taken the initiative in leading this struggle have strengthened themselves and not weakened themselves, and where there has been the merger of the A. F. of L. unions, it has not been at the cost of weakening the revolutionary movement, but greatly broadening and deepening the mass roots of the revolutionary trade union movement.
>
> "An outstanding example of this has been the Paterson silk workers and dyers, which gives an answer that should convince the most skeptical of our comrades, that should convince everybody except the incurable egomaniacs and renegades like Zack." (*Ibid*, p. 209.)

Pointing out that "we must from top to bottom in our movement change the tone with which we approach and deal with the A. F. of L. unions", and that "while criticizing and exposing more concretely, more effectively, the treacherous leadership of the officialdom, we must make it in a manner that is really convincing to the broadest rank and file", Browder continues:

> "And we must establish that we are not an irresponsible criticizing opposition within the union, but that we are the most active and responsible section of the union; ready ourselves to take the full responsibility for the leadership and the administration of the union as a whole and responsible to the whole mass of the membership.
>
> ". . . We come into the unions not to be the minority, but to win the majority in the shortest possible time, to break down the whole ideology of our forms and habits which we have" (p. 210).
>
> ". . . The trade union question is, of course, basic to the whole problem of the united front. The signs of the development of the united front moves and movements among the workers are above all demonstrated in the trade unions. Precisely in this connection we have spoken about the various industries and such phenomena as

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the rebuff given to Green's circular for the expulsion of the Communists." (*Ibid*, p. 211.)

* * *

One of the world-phenomena of this decade of the general crisis of capitalism is the series of government measures taken in the United States in the effort to overcome the crisis in the capitalist way —the N.R.A. Few governmental acts have so deeply affected directly the labor movement as this major policy of the American bourgeoisie through Roosevelt. The Communist Party's reaction to this phenomenon, in contrast to that of social reformism, is one of the forces of history. Browder's book reflects it:

"All capitalist contradictions are embodied in Roosevelt's 'New Deal' policies. Roosevelt promises to feed the hungry by reducing the production of food. He promises to redistribute wealth by billions of subsidies to the banks and corporations. He gives help to the 'forgotten' man by speeding up the process of monopoly and trustification. He would increase the purchasing power of the masses through inflation, which gives them a dollar worth only 60 cents. He drives the Wall Street money changers out of the temple of government by giving them complete power in the administration of the governmental machinery of the industrial codes. He gives the workers the right of organization by legalizing the company unions. He inaugurates a regime of economy by shifting the tax burden to the consuming masses, by cutting appropriations for wages, veterans and social services, while increasing the war budget a billion dollars and giving ten billions to those who already own everything. He restores the faith of the masses in democracy by beginning the introduction of fascism. He works for international peace, by launching the sharpest trade and currency war in history" (p. 30).

"What has happened to the 'New Deal'? Has it failed? Many workers, in the first stages of disillusionment, come to that conclusion. They are disillusioned with the result, but still believe in the intention. The S. P. and A. F. of L. leaders try to keep them in this stage. But this conclusion is entirely too simple. The 'New Deal' has not improved conditions for the workers and exploited masses. But that was never its real aim; that was only ballyhoo; that was the only bait with which to catch suckers. In its first and chief aim, the 'New Deal' succeeded; that aim was to bridge over the most difficult situation for the capitalists, and to launch a new attack upon the workers with the help of their leaders; to keep the workers from general resistance; to begin to restore the profits of finance capital." (*Ibid*, p. 32.)

* * *

The Negro masses constitute, maybe, no more than ten per cent of the population, but the struggle for liberation of these Negro masses constitutes a much larger "percentage" of the future American Revolution—a decisive fact which is due to the special position

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of the Negro masses as an oppressed national group. Some years ago—about the beginning of the period of the Scottsboro fight which is now reaching its most tense stage—a controversy started between the Socialist Party and the Communist Party over the theoretical question: what is the nature of the problem of the liberation of the Negro masses, and the consequent practical political problems, what approach to make to the Negro masses in the country generally, and, what attitude to take toward the Negro and white masses in the South. The most fundamental differences developed; the Socialist Party, as its views were expressed by Norman Thomas and Frank Crosswaithe, undertook to be the "practical Americans" and to abjure all "visionary" notions. But the result thus far is shown startlingly in several facts. First, that a trained and hardened and quickly growing cadre of Negro leaders has been created and has taken a foremost position in the Communist Party, whereas Negro leaders are rare in the Socialist Party (not a single member on the N.E.C.) and its meetings are usually without many Negro participants. Second, in every case and in every locality where the Negro membership of the Communist Party has increased, there has been at least a proportionate increase in white membership. Third: In the South, where, according to the prevalent opinion of the Socialist Party, "the white workers will not join if the Negroes are taken in," and where the "idea of self-determination for the Black Belt will bring annihilation to the party proposing it and bloody race war to the Negro"—precisely in the South the Communist Party has made significant advance and the Socialist Party big losses, while in Alabama and Georgia the best of the leading cadres of the Socialist Party have come over to the Communist Party and given as the first explanation that the Communist Party alone is able to solve the Negro question in the South.

It is our "impractical" and "crazy" Communist Party, with its Leninist-Stalinist "un-American" theory that proves to be the most *American* of all the contending forces. "American" in the sense implied in a remark of a Southern white worker to me in Atlanta, Georgia: "Maybe some other party might do for other places, but the Communist Party is the only one that can be accepted by the *Southern* workers." Explaining that the Communist policy of struggle for equal rights for Negroes and for the organization of Negroes and whites together "for the first time makes a clear road ahead for the real organization of Southern labor," this white worker argued that the Communist Party "is the most *American* thing in America and the most *Southern* thing in the South". These remarks took place in a convention of the Communist Party in Georgia in which the majority of the delegates and most authoritative leaders were Negroes.

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Browder has played a big part in the development of the policies and work of the Party in this respect, and this is reflected in his book:

> "The struggle for the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution for the Negroes, as for other oppressed nations, thus becomes today objectively a revolutionary struggle to overthrow imperialism. As such it is an ally of the revolutionary proletariat against the common enemy—finance capital. Such agrarian revolution can be realized only through winning national self-determination for the Negroes in that territory in which they constitute the majority of the population and the basic productive force upon the land, or as a by-product of a victorious proletarian revolution in the country as a whole. The basic slogan of Negro liberation is, therefore, the slogan of self-determination; the basic demand of the Negroes is the demand for the land. Throughout the United States the struggle for Negro liberation is expressed in the struggle for complete equality, for the abolition of all segregation laws and practices (Jim-Crowism), the struggle against the ideas, propagated by the white ruling class of Negro inferiority (a form of national chauvinism which we call white chauvinism), which is used to justify the oppression of the Negroes and to keep the Negro and white toilers divided.
>
> "These basic political considerations have been, by experience, proved to be absolutely necessary weapons to make effectual even the smallest struggle for Negro rights. Let us consider, for example, the world-famous Scottsboro case, which has represented one of the major political achievements of the Communist Party in the last period. How impossible it would have been to rouse the Negro masses in the United States in millions to the support of the Scottsboro boys; how impossible to have joined with them millions of white toilers and middle classes; how impossible to have stirred the entire world, as was done—if the Scottsboro case had been taken up from the liberal-humanitarian point of view, or if it had been approached from the narrow Social-Democratic viewpoint! The Scottsboro case stirred America to its depths, not merely because nine friendless Negro boys were threatened with an unjust death, but because their cause was brought forward clearly as a symbol of the national oppression of twelve million Negroes in America, because the fight for their freedom was made the symbol for the fight of the Negro farmers for their land, of the fight for the self-determination in the Black Belt, of the fight against lynchings, against Jim-Crowism, against the smallest discriminations, for unconditional social and political equality for the Negroes." (*Ibid*, pp. 46-47.)

But the successes of the Communist Party in this field were not attained on a basis of narrow provincial prejudices. As a world-important question our policies on this field also are formed with the assistance of the Communist International.

> "The Bolshevik program on the Negro question was not simply a generalization of our own experiences in America. It was an application of Lenin's program on the national question which

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summarized the world experience of generations of revolutionary struggle and especially the experiences of the revolutionary solution of the national question in the Soviet Union. We could not have arrived at our program only upon the basis of our own American experience. It was the existence of the World Party of Communism which made possible for us the elaboration of a correct Leninist program on the Negro question.

"It is impossible for the Communist Party to lead the struggle for Negro liberation unless it begins by burning out of its own ranks every manifestation and trace of the influence of white chauvinism, of the bourgeois system of ideas of Negro inferiority which stinks of the slave market. The Yokinen trial was mass propaganda for this begnnning of the struggle." (*Ibid*, p. 292.)

* * *

There is nothing strange in the fact that in a number of countries, not least of all the United States, the heritage of sectarianism has hung heavy upon the shoulders of the revolutionary party. In the formative years of the First International and ever since, this question has been a matter of no mystery to the creative leaders of the Communist movement. During the struggle with Bakunin in the seventies, Marx wrote:

"The first phase of the proletariat's struggle against the bourgeoisie is characterized by the sectarian movement. It has its justification for existence in the epoch when the proletariat is as yet not sufficiently developed to act as a class. Individual thinkers, subjecting social antagonisms to criticism, give imaginary solutions to the question, which the working masses have only to accept, popularize and apply in a practical way. By their very nature the sects formed by such priests hold back [from the political struggle]; they are aloof from all real activity, aloof from politics, strikes, coalitions—in a word from all activity of any kind. The proletarian masses always remain indifferent, and even hostile to their propaganda. . . . To sum up: sectarianism is only the outcome of the infancy of the proletarian movement, just as astrology and alchemy represent the infancy of science."

Be it understood clearly that we have not yet shaken off by any means the full burden of sectarianism. This hangs upon us still as a deadly menace, the cost of which, if not discarded, could be paid for heavily by the working class in blood to an American fascism. A bold Bolshevik policy of participation in "politics, strikes, coalitions" by the Communist Party can be accomplished only with an equally bold cleaning of the Party of sectarianism.

"The Achilles heel of fascism is its social base. Here we must hit it." (Dimitroff.)

But we cannot strike successfully at a social base if our methods of thought and action are those of a sect. Marx, referring to "the

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opposition between the movement of a sect and the movement of a class," said:

> "The sect sees the justification for its existence and its 'point of honor'—not in what it has in *common* with the class movement, but in the *particular shiboleth* which *distinguishes* it from it." *

The great mass of American labor, with profound changes of radicalization, are compelled to move into action in defense of their trade-union rights, the whole of the remnants of democratic rights in America; the mass of the farm population, the millions of the lower middle classes are faced with compelling need to fight the desperately real attacks that are American forms of fascist advance. At all cost we must eradicate the tendencies to find a "point of honor" in "particular shibboleths" that "distinguish" us from these masses, and must find what we have "in common with the class movement".

One of the most difficult things for the sectarian mind to understand is the attitude of the Communist Party toward the traditions of the country, toward what it is customary to call "our Country" or "the Fatherland". Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin—all the great leaders of the modern labor movement have emphasized that "the proletariat has no fatherland". Internationalism, the brotherhood of the oppressed of all nations, is the bed-rock of the Communist position on this question. Chauvinism and Communism are irreconcilable and mortal enemies. The sectarian mind, if it gets so far, stops at that and can go no further. "This is the chasm between myself, as a revolutionist, and the mass of ordinary mortals," thinks the sectarian. When the proletariat at last has conquered one-sixth of the earth and by building a Socialist society destroys the basis for application within the Socialist country of Marx's formulation (that "the proletariat has no fatherland"), then the sectarian may possibly more or less admit that there *is a* Socialist Fatherland (for the workers of the entire world, though located within one country). But generally the dyed-in-the-wool sectarian finds it difficult or impossible to lay *revolutionary claim* to the country and, as *against* the bourgeoisie to claim it as his "own" in prospect and as a means of revolutionary struggle.

Vastly different is a certain tendency in the Socialist Party toward *nationalism*. Browder deals with this, using a quotation from a representative of this tendency in the Socialist Party, Joseph Sharts:

> "Frank recognition of the futility of all socialist efforts so long as we ignore or oppose these elemental emotional forces implied in

* "Letter to Schweitzer," *The Correspondence of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels*, p. 251.

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> 'Americanism', 'nationalism' and 'patriotism', and therefore the need of utilizing, or at least, neutralizing them by a shift of attitude and propaganda so as to enlist national pride and love of country.
>
> "The socialist appeal, which relies on a vague internationalism and a mythical working-class instinct of solidarity, is easily crushed whenever it meets the elemental emotional forces roused under the name of patriotism.
>
> "These great traditions cluster around the Stars and Stripes and make it worthy to be fought for, regardless of the capitalist connections in recent years.
>
> "Not by the pacifist, but by the patriotic approach lies our path to power and freedom." (*Ibid.*, Quoted in Browder's book, p. 64.)

And Browder's comment on this illuminating platform of Mr. Sharts is:

> "It would be difficult to improve on Mr. Sharts by quoting directly from Hitler."

The difference in these two *uses* of American traditions is sharp and clear. Sharts, the opportunist, uses bourgeois revolutionary traditions, not to reach proletarian revolutionary conclusions and to inspire a firm course of class struggle, but in *contrast* to proletarian traditions and to inspire capitulation to a chamber-of-commerce conception of "Americanism" as "nationalism" and of "patriotism" in relation to a *patrie* of Rockefellers. To "enlist national pride" means for Mr. Sharts an opportunist absorption in the imperialist chauvinism of 1900-1935, and not a revival and defense of the traditions of the revolutionary war against slavery of the time when Marx could call the Republic of Lincoln "the only popular government in the world and when Marx declared that: "From the commencement of the titanic American strife the workingmen of Europe felt distinctly that the Star-Spangled Banner carried the destiny of their class."

The difference in the *choice* of traditions is also clear. All the magnificent history of the revolutionary *internationalism* of the young American Republic—of the time when an American warship rescued the Hungarian revolutionist Louis Kossuth from the coast of Turkey after the defeat of his cause in 1848—or of the superb international solidarity of the British working class which prevented British intervention in the American Civil War—all this disappears for Mr. Sharts. Where Browder finds in "the traditions of 1776" the "principles" of revolutionary internationalism in struggle by the working class for power and finds the working class instinct of solidarity the supreme living force today, Mr. Sharts sees only those—let us say "Daughters of the Revolution-ary" traditions that a Hoover may cite in a luncheon speech to a Chamber of Commerce in favor of the *conservation* of the power of capital. And so, Mr.

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Sharts' "American traditions" are in sharp contrast to what he actually describes as "a *vague* internationalism and a *mythical* working class instinct for power".

In boldly taking over the best of American traditions, we do not play the game of chauvinism. Chauvinism is the rotten meat of fascism, and cannot under any circumstances be of use to the modern proletariat.

> "A wave of chauvinism is being roused by capitalist press and statesmen, without precedent in time of peace. Fascism is rearing its ugly head more boldly every day in the U. S. A." (*Ibid.*, p. 22).

And as this wave sweeps over the country it finds its support in each case where among the workers concessions are made to the "American principle that Negroes shall not vote, or sit on juries, or join trade unions with whites, or live in equal rights as human beings; and the Ku Klux Klan can find, if you like, plenty of *a certain kind* of "American traditions" for the bloody slaughter that is even now proceeding with lynching, and with "rape cases" that strangely keep an inverse ratio to the price of cotton.

There is much in the *choice* of traditions. In our traditions of 1894, is it the traditions of the jailed strike-leader, Eugene V. Debs, that we cite, or is it the traditions of Grover Cleveland who sent the troops—and certainly both of these are American traditions. In Missouri, today some heroic farmers are carrying out American traditions in manhandling the legal puppets of the bankers who come to take their farms; and these legal puppets are themselves certainly carrying out the worst of American traditions.

The workers will choose the American traditions that Browder cites.

* * *

If anyone thinks that a book by the steersman of a Communist Party, necessarily up to his ears about sixteen hours every day in the extremely practical, realistic work of strikes, trade-union organization problems, political conflicts and problems of meeting the brutal attacks of police and fascist agencies, must be a heavy-going and one-sidedly "practical" book—let him be disillusioned by reading the last four chapters of this work, touching the field of theory, of literature, of philosophy—and of that ideological phenomenon which Marx calls "the opium of the people".

A demolishing exposé of the counter-revolutionary Trotskyist professor Sidney Hook furnishes pages that are a delight to anyone capable of reveling in the clear-hard polemical methods of the Marxist-Leninist dialectician.

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"The working class must have a different kind of philosophy, because the working class faces the future—not only faces the future, is already beginning to control the future. That is the essence of planning, *to control the future.* And you cannot control the future if your approach to the future is that it is impossible to know what is the truth until after the future has become the past. Those who are going to control the future must know what is the truth before the event, before it happens, and by knowing it, determine what is going to happen and see that it does happen. That is the revolutionary working class, the only power that is able to put into effect a planned economy, and the only class that is capable of developing the whole philosophy and the understanding of society, which is necessary to put a plan into effect" (p. 326).

"We pointed out above that dialectical materialism, free from the pragmatic revisions of Hook, is necessary for the working class because the working class represents the future development of society. In the working class we have that complete correspondence between the objective and subjective factors of society, between the laws of economic and social development and the class needs of the workers, which for the first time makes possible the unity between the class needs and aspirations and the most coldly objective, scientific study and understanding of the society in which that class conducts its struggles. Precisely this is what Hook does not and cannot understand. . . ."

"This idealistic conception of Hook, while it puts on a brave revolutionary face as emphasizing action, more action, achieves the opposite result in reality by laying the foundation for confusion and disruption. . . .

"Only this understanding of the objective and scientific character of our program and our philosophy gives us the capacity for carrying through the proletarian revolution. . . ." (*Ibid*, pp. 331-332.)

"Communism is inevitable, but it is only inevitable because the working class will inevitably fight to overthrow capitalism and consciously establish Communism. The inevitability of Communism by no means belittles the active role of the working class, as Hook would have us believe, but on the contrary." (*Ibid*, p. 332.)

* * *

In the middle of February this year occurred a gathering which at any previous time would have been considered strange if not impossible. It was a meeting of a group of students of the Union Theological Seminary, plus the General Secretary of the Communist Party. The very fact of such a contact throws a remarkable light—and to many a bewildering light—upon the profound disturbance that is proceeding in the ideological structure and institutions of ideological control of the decaying capitalist system. But if, while Hitler's torture-chambers mingle the blood of Catholics and Protestants with the blood of Communist and Socialist labor organizers, and LaGuardia's police courts in New York handcuff Catholic seamen to Communists—if at the same time theological students seek to bring their minds in contact with the Communist movement—

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we have from this "strange" contact a literary result which in my opinion is nothing less than brilliant. A stenographic record of the conversation of Browder with this group of religious youths is included in the book. It is not merely good. It has a quality that cannot be made at a writing-desk. It has that dialectical many-sidedness and depth that can come only from an actual exchange of this kind. In my opinion, Browder's answers form a document of permanent value in the propaganda literature of the Communist movement.

* * *

There is also published Browder's speech in debate with George Soule on the possibility of social planning in a capitalist society, and this furnishes a brilliant and useful section of the book:

> "The Soviet Union is at the present time the only country where social planning is possible. What was the first step which the toilers of Russia took towards social planning? That was the proletarian revolution—the dictatorship of the proletariat—which abolished private property in the means of production. Engels many decades ago posed the question: when does 'socialized production upon a predetermined plan become possible'? His answer is clear. 'The proletarian revolution, solution of the contradictions, the proletariat seizes public power and by means of this transforms the socialized means of production, slipping from the hands of the bourgeoisie into public property. By this act the proletariat frees the means of production from the character of capital they have thus far borne and gives their socialized character complete freedom to work itself out. *Socialized production upon a predetermined plan becomes henceforth possible.*" (Ibid, p. 106.)

* * *

The serious man, woman or youth who wants not only to find the guiding threads of the past history of our country, but also to understand the forces that are shaping its *future* history, should be told plainly that he *cannot* do either unless he studies the method of analysis, the development, the strategy and tactics of *the political party of the class which will be decisive to its future.* If a man were living in the late 1850's, he would be told that to understand the history of America, it would be necessary to study the development of the then young political party of the modern capitalist class, which class then stood at the threshold of its victory and its undivided rule over America, the Republican Party, with the currents that went to make it up, the anti-slavery movements, the Free Soil Party, the fighters of "Bloody Kansas", etc. But it is a thousand times more deeply true to say this now of the Communist Party because of the greater profundity of the change that this party will lead in bringing

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about and the greater directness and clarity of its program. The bourgeoisie, even in the past when still carrying out a revolutionary task, carried corruption, trickery and dissimulation into all of its acts and therefore into its program, because its purpose, though revolutionary and progressive, was to establish *another system of exploitation and violence* with itself as the parasite class. But the proletarian revolutionary Party seeks, not to establish another system of exploitation and fraud, with another class of parasites in power, but to do away with all exploitation and the entire system of subjection by hypocrisy and robbery by fraud. Therefore the Communist Party is the only party that can and does lay its cards face up on the table, makes a *science* of its program and gives clear, sharp, honest statements of its aims, its strategy and its tactics. This, and the necessarily broad, democratic mass base upon which it must rely for its support by the very nature of its program, require that the Communist Party has no secrets from the masses. "The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims." This attitude always astonishes and puzzles the bourgeois publicists, for whom politics is a conspiracy of groups within the upper classes and "platforms" are but words intended to conceal reality.

In this book you will, therefore, find both the strategy and the tactics of the most decisive party of the present day and future; you will have clear light upon the manner in which its tactics are developed, checked and corrected, modified to meet each change in the always-changing situation. You will see just what *is* the role of that great world leader which is not in the least "alien" to any country in the world, the Communist International, and the active share that is taken in shaping *its* policies by the American working class and its leaders such as Foster, Browder and Ford. Before the true picture of the great "lessons taught us by that first Communist Party, the most successful one, created and led to victory by Lenin, and now successfully building Socialism under the leadership of Stalin", and the necessarily great role that the Communist Party of victorious achievement plays in the leadership of the Communist International of all countries, will fade the false picture of "dictatorship from Moscow".

Browder shows that "Bolshevizing the Party"—applying the lessons taught us by Lenin and Stalin

> ". . . means to become a party of the (American) masses; to be a party with its strongest roots among the decisive workers in the basic industries; it means to be a party whose stronghold is in the (American) shops, mines and factories. . . ." (*Ibid*, p. 65.)

—and what, but precisely *that*, could make us truly the *American*

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Communist Party? We could do nothing for the American masses, nothing in the shaping of the history of America, if we were to allow the international bankers of Wall Street to confine us away from the International of labor.

> "The experience of the victorious workers of the Soviet Union before, during and after the seizure of power, throws a brilliant light showing the path which must be followed in every land, the path of Bolshevism, of Marx, of Engels, Lenin and Stalin." (*Ibid*, p. 17.)

* * *

As these lines are written, forces of imperialist reaction under the leadership of the fascist criminals appear to be plunging the world toward the second World War, and doing their utmost to shape the course of such a war toward a "holy crusade" led by the fascist butchers against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. We know that this Communist Party of the United States has already proved itself and will prove itself still more *indispensable* in the creation in this country of the "great progressive people's movement against fascism and war".

The Communist Party is not a pacifist party, but the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Party, and therefore it can lead the struggle against war both in peace-time and otherwise. And when, despite our efforts to hold it off, and in spite of successes in this struggle, imperialist war is forced upon the world by a maddened, sick, decaying capitalism, we know that this same Communist Party can and must and will have so cast off the dead weight of a sectarian heritage as to be the decisive leading force in this country in causing the bourgeoisie to "miss certain of the governments that are near and dear to them and which are today happily ruling "by the grace of God".

And we know that:

> "In every material respect, the United States is fully ripe for Socialism. Its accumulated wealth and productive forces, together with an inexhaustible supply of almost all of the raw materials, provide a complete material basis for Socialism. All material conditions exist for a society which could at once provide every necessity of life and even a degree of luxury for the entire population, with an expenditure of labor of three or four hours a day." (*Ibid*, p. 18.)

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Marxist-Leninist Education of Our Membership in the Light of the May Plenum of the C.C.

By EVA ROBINS

THE last plenum of the Central Committee of our Party, held in May, paid special attention to the problem of Marxist-Leninist education of our membership and generally to the struggle on the ideological front. The plenum emphasized the agit-prop work, school work, the promotion of Marxist-Leninist education among our own membership, and the winning over of the majority of the working class to our ideology, in the present period, become the day-to-day task of our Party.

The hammering out of a correct general line of the Party lays the basis for correct, Bolshevik work. That our Party has a correct general line is beyond question. Life has proved it. But, as was made clear by the reports of Comrades Stachel and Browder, the carrying into life of this correct general line is still greatly hampered by the lack of correct organizational methods and of sufficient human material necessary to apply the Party line in everyday work. Organization and cadres, the plenum declared, are the means by which the Party will be enabled to carry out the tremendous tasks facing it.

Never in the history of the American working class has our Party had such favorable objective conditions for its work. At the beginning of the N.R.A., workers and even some Party members had *illusions* about the plans of American capitalism to get out of the crisis. But before long they began to realize that the Blue Eagle actually decreased their real wages and in many ways worsened their conditions while being of real help only to a handful of money-bags. Then came the breakdown of the N.R.A. This was accompanied by attacks upon the living standards of the toiling masses—wage cuts, increases in working hours, etc. As a result, great masses of workers have come nearer to understanding that the *way out* proposed by the capitalists (whether by Roosevelt or the manufacturers opposed to the N.R.A.) was a class way out (for the bourgeoisie) and was not and is not in the interests of the suffering masses. The search for a *real way out* is beginning to be expressed by these masses in anti-capitalist sentiments. These anti-capitalist sentiments are not

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yet crystalized and clarified. Hence, while we see the growth of our Party, numerically and in influence, we witness also the rise of various demagogic movements: "Left" bourgeois movements, such as the Sinclair Epic movement in California, the Townsend movement in Colorado and neighboring states; and on the other hand, the Huey Long and Father Coughlin movements (which are fascist and semi-fascist in reality), as well as the latest Roosevelt wrinkle —"soak-the-rich" fake tax bills. All these groups are seeking to utilize the tremendous anti-capitalist sentiments of the awakening masses and to direct them into "safe" channels.

It becomes now imperative for our Party to expose these movements in the clearest and most understandable way—understandable not to thousands, but to *millions*. We must explain the true nature of these movements, combat them and bring forth crystal-clear the program of our Party, which is *the only real way out* for millions of oppressed and exploited toilers. It is necessary in the U.S.A. now, as Lenin pointed out in discussing conditions in Russia in 1902,

> ". . . to collect, if one may put it that way, and concentrate all these drops and streamlets of popular excitement that are called forth by the conditions of Russian life to a far larger extent than we imagine, but which it is precisely necessary to combine into a *single gigantic* flood."*

Comrade Stalin, in his historic speech to the graduating Red Army commanders, in the early part of June of this year, speaking about cadres, said:

> ". . . we must first of all learn to value people, to value cadres, to value every worker capable of benefiting our common cause. . . . It must be realized that under our present conditions 'cadres decide everything'."

Elsewhere in the same speech, dealing with the promotion and development of cadres, Comrade Stalin says:

> "The slogan 'Cadres decide everything' demands that our leaders should display the solicitous attitude towards our workers, 'little' and 'big', no matter in what sphere they are engaged, cultivating them assiduously, assisting them when they need support, encouraging them when they display their first successes, advancing them, and so forth."

These words of our great and beloved leader are of utmost importance to us. They hold true not only for the country that has already carried through the proletarian revolution and has achieved the victory of Socialism, but for us in the capitalist U.S.A., where

* All Lenin quotations are from *Collected Works*, Vol. IV, Book II.

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we are engaged in preparing the revolution for bringing about a Soviet America.

What kind of leaders must we have to carry out the tasks confronting us? This question is of decisive importance. We must have active people trained in the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin—basic industrial workers, native Americans, mass workers, people who will be able to counteract the bourgeois demagogic, fascist and semi-fascist propaganda; who will know how to bring forth the Party line in a clear way to the millions of toilers seeking a way out; who will be able "to collect all the drops and streamlets of popular excitement" produced by conditions of American life "into a single flood", into a single movement carried on by millions of toilers and their organizations, under the leadership of the Party of the working class—the Communist Party of the U.S.A. To prepare these leaders it is necessary to equip our entire membership with the teachings of Marxism-Leninism.

The resolution of the May Plenum points out that one of the basic needs of the Party is "*a conscious and persistent raising of the consciousness of each and every individual Party member*". It points out particularly:

> "More systematic educational activities from the lower organizations up, in the form of discussions, study circles, correspondence courses, Section, District and national training schools, for the continuous training, especially of new elements who enter our Party; by the following up of the cadres and improvement in promotion of cadres."

In discussing some of the most important tasks of the Party, the May Resolution further states:

> "The Central Committee Plenum emphasized the necessity of strengthening the fighting abilities of the various Party organizations (shop units, street units, fractions), improving the leading capacity of the leading committees. . . . The District and Section Committees must immediately take steps to assign these leading forces to shop nuclei and concentration street units. . . . It is by transferring more and more the center of gravity of our work from the street units to the shop nuclei, planning each important campaign from the viewpoint of how to bring it in the first place to the workers in the most important factories, that not only will our Party be more strongly connected with the basic masses and be able to lead the struggles, but we will improve also the composition of the Party, which means a better basis for the development of new and better cadres."

This explains why the resolution so strongly stresses the "raising of the consciousness of each individual Party member". The need is for persistent systematic agit-prop work, schools, study circles, etc.,

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as an integral part of all our activities, as an integral part of building cadres.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THEORY

The founders of Marxism-Leninism have attached great importance to the question of theory. Let us examine how this question applies to the present situation and needs, in order to strengthen our work still further in this field.

To do this it will be necessary to make a brief historical review of the contributions of the founders of scientific Communism on this point, and connect these with present-day events and tasks.

In 1874, the German proletariat was at the head of the international movement. In the Preface to his *The Peasant War in Germany*, Engels presents the following as a principal factor in that situation:

> "For the first time in the history of the labor movement, the struggle is being so conducted that its *three* sides, the theoretical, the political, and the practical economic (resistance to the capitalist) form one harmonious and well-planned *entity*. In this concentric attack, as it were, lies the strength and invincibility of the German movement. . . . To this end it will be necessary to double our energies in all the spheres of struggle and agitation. *It is the specific duty of the leaders to gain an ever clearer understanding of the theoretical problems* . . . and constantly to keep in mind that Socialism, having become a *science*, demands the same treatment as every other science—*it must be studied.*" (Quoted by Lenin, pp. 111-12—our emphasis.)

To this Lenin and the Bolsheviks attached the greatest significance in their revolutionary struggles with the Mensheviks, the Economists, and the reformists, in fighting against their petty-bourgeois "theory of spontaneity"; in fighting for the *conscious element, the Party*, the only force which, at the head of the workers' movement, is able to direct it into the line of class struggle. Communists must fight not only for the immediate demands and needs of the masses, but, on the basis of these struggles, must bring them to a higher political (*class*) level, to a struggle against the capitalist system, for the power of the proletariat.

In *What Is To Be Done?* written in 1902, Lenin gave the following three main reasons why the Communists must make Marxism-Leninism the basis of their everyday work:

1. *The necessity of making our ideology the predominant one within the working class.*

The Bolshevik Party at that time was in the state of formation. There existed various "shades" of ideology within the working class movement, and there was the need of making our "shade" the predominant one:

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> "The fate of Russian Social-Democracy [now Communism] for many, many years to come may be determined by the strengthening of one or the other 'shade'" (p. 110).

Our theory, always in the process of development, always adding to itself as a result of further experiences in the international proletarian class struggle, tested and proved in the fire of victorious struggles, has become *a complete science*—complete in the dialectical sense of the word. But the other "shades" (Social-Democracy, etc.) have also become completed during this time—completed in the sense of even more fully reflecting bourgeois ideology in all its "shades" within the working class, notwithstanding the fact that the ideology of the reformists is crumbling, as is their movement, and they must often depart from their own "theories" in order to keep up with the Leftward moving masses. In the United States the chief leaders of the Socialist Party both of the "Old Guard" and the militants (Oneal, Thomas, etc.), are still fighting the basic teachings of Marx and Engels, saying that these theories are "out of date". The A. F. of L. top bureaucracy—despite changed *tactics* in many instances, prompted by the militancy of the masses—still advocates its policy of class collaboration instead of class struggle; of bourgeois policies instead of independent working class political action. Added to all this, we have direct bourgeois ideology injected into the workers by the radio, church, and press. All these "theories" are now, unfortunately, instilled within the working class to a far greater extent than is our revolutionary theory. The struggle, therefore, at the present time, is a struggle between conflicting ideologies, and as such is of an even far greater magnitude than that in the formative period of the Bolshevik Party. Because of this, the warning of Lenin on the necessity for the sharpest struggle on the theoretical front, becomes, now, of paramount importance.

2. *Our tasks in the struggle for proletarian internationalism.*

Our movement is an international movement. This means that the need of our movement consists not only in fighting national chauvinism, but in the need to assimilate the experiences of other countries. But most important is the understanding of these experiences and the ability to make the proper use of them. Lenin, therefore, says:

> "In order to assimilate this experience, it is not sufficient merely to be acquainted with it, or simply to transcribe the latest resolutions. A critical attitude is required towards this experience, and *ability to subject it to independent tests*" (p. 110—our emphasis).

These words are of special significance to us in the present period of the advent of fascism in many countries, of the spread of ultra-

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reactionary, counter-revolutionary national chauvinism, fostered by fascism and imperialism generally, of the process of fascization going on in the "most democratic country in the world", the U.S.A. The spreading of the Marxist-Leninist teachings of revolutionary proletarian internationalism, the most relentless struggle against reactionary nationalism, is at present a basic task of the Party in the struggle against fascism and war.

The knowledge of the experiences of the international proletariat, and "*the ability to subject them to independent tests*", is one of the most crying needs of our movement in the present period. How fresh and timely are the above-quoted words of Lenin, written in 1903 in Russia, for us in the U.S.A. in 1935!

What are some of these experiences? The experiences of the Russian Bolsheviks in their struggle for power and in the eighteen years of proletarian rule; the experiences of our heroic German brother-Party in its glorious struggle against the barbarism of Hitler fascism; the experiences of the heroic Chinese Communists in magnificent struggle against foreign imperialism and the White Terror of Chiang Kai-shek; the glorious march of the heroic Chinese Red Armies; the experiences of the heroic fighters against the fascist offensive in Poland, France, Spain, etc.—how all these experiences, with the "*ability to subject them to independent tests*", can help and further our struggles for the everyday needs of the masses and the struggle for proletarian power in the U.S.A.!

These experiences we must know and be able to explain to the masses of toilers in this country, not only because they can inspire and aid our struggles, but because we must combat the lies of the bourgeoisie and the hordes of counter-revolutionary agents of the bourgeoisie in the ranks of the working class—in the first place, *counter-revolutionary Trotskyism.* This has become especially necessary at the present time when the world-historic achievements of the Soviet Union in building Socialism, in being the only factor in maintaining world peace (notably the Franco-Soviet Pact) are presented by these counter-revolutionary forces as "betrayals of the working class", thus aiding capitalism (Hearst) to organize the anti-Soviet crusade. The splendid achievements of the French working class, the best example to the world proletariat of how to unite the ranks of the working class, how to build a people's front in the struggle against the fascist offensive, is presented by this spearhead of counter-revolution (Trotskyism), also as "betrayals" of the working class, with the lie that the French Party has "given up" the struggle against militarism! Thus, Trotskyism is working with the bourgeoisie in splitting the ranks of the toiling masses. This boss propaganda is also carried on, in one form or another, by the other rene-

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gades from Communism, by the most reactionary leaders of the A. F. of L., and by the leaders of the Socialist Party. These treacherous elements must be combated. It is, however, impossible to know these experiences and "*to be able to subject them to independent test*" without having Marxism-Leninism, the science, the theory and practice of proletarian revolution, as the basis of our everyday work.

3. *Our struggle for proletarian power.*

This is the greatest task confronting the Communist Party—a task that has never been shouldered by any other political party: the task of *carrying out the proletarian revolution*, the setting up of the proletarian State, the building of Socialism, the final abolition of class society—the establishment of Communism. This task can be accomplished by the proletariat in alliance with the lower middle class, the poor and middle farmers, only led by the party which is the vanguard of the proletariat, the party which has as the basis of all its work the most advanced, the most revolutionary theory, from which flows the most advanced, the most revolutionary practice—the Communist Party.

> ". . . *the role of vanguard can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by an advanced theory*" (p. 110).

Therefore, Lenin warns us again and again:

> ". . . the belittling of the role of 'the conscious element', of the role of Social-Democracy [now Communism] *means, whether one likes it or not, growth of influence of bourgeois ideology among the workers* . . . to belittle Socialist [now Communist] ideology *in any way, to deviate from it in the slightest degree* means strengthening bourgeois ideology" (pp. 121-23).

The struggle for Soviet Power was placed by our Party's Eighth Convention as the center of all our work. All our struggles for immediate demands of the toiling masses are part and parcel of the struggle for power—for a Soviet America. Here we come directly face to face with the most basic problems of the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism—the question of the allies of the proletariat, united front tactics, work in the trade unions, shop work, etc., problems that can be solved only on the basis of the theory and practice of the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin.

The need for united action of the entire working class has become of strategic importance. Our Party in the U. S. A., like the Comintern on a world scale, is in the forefront of the struggle for fighting for working class unity. The problem here is of winning the majority of the working class to a revolutionary fighting united front. Here we reach out to the broadest strata of toilers—those connected with any sort of workers' or even anti-working class movement, as

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well as those disconnected from any movement, for united action for common demands. Simultaneously with the struggle for winning these masses for such united action, we must carry on the struggle for winning these masses away from the anti-working class ideologies, to our ideology.

Hence, Lenin's warning against belittling, or deviating from, the Communist theory, Engels' call for the *study* of Marxism as a science, the need of carrying on a relentless struggle on the theoretical front, and the need of preparing cadres armed with Marxism-Leninism, cannot be too much stressed.

* * *

From the foregoing we have seen why the founders of scientific Socialism have attached so much importance to proletarian ideology and the theory of our movement, and why at the present period this question assumes the key importance which lies at the basis of the line of the Central Committee resolution in this field of Party activity. In this section we shall deal with some of the politically important practical aspects of this work.

AGIT-PROP WORK—INTEGRAL PART OF ENTIRE PARTY ACTIVITY

While schools are one of our chief means of bringing Marxism-Leninism to our leading cadres, our entire Party work must be organized in such a way that everything we do becomes, simultaneously with action, part of the study of our theory. It becomes a problem, then, of helping and organizing the work and study of our membership. The study of Marxism-Leninism must be carried through our entire Party—through the Sections, shop nuclei, and street units. Every major action of the particular unit must be placed on the proper political footing. Every action must be analyzed and understood in its connection with the class struggle generally, with the political basis for this particular action, with the basic teachings of Marxism-Leninism, may it be unemployment work, trade union work, work in a particular factory, distribution of literature and the *Daily Worker*, work in connection with election campaigns, etc. This is what is meant by making agit-prop work an integral part of our entire Party activity.

Hitherto this was not the case. Agit-prop work was considered "an appendage", something of "third rate" importance. This weakened our entire Party work. This must be changed. This change means exactly what Engels and Lenin told us we must do: carry on our struggle on *three* fronts of the class struggle—the theoretical, political, and economic. This is what they fought about with the

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reformists who, not recognizing the theoretical form of struggle, left the workers to the influence of bourgeois ideology. Carrying on the struggle on the ideological front, as far as our inner-Party life is concerned, means, aside from linking up all our work with the basic teachings of Marxism-Leninism, the carrying on of classes, study circles, and well organized reading in the units, Sections, and Districts, as pointed out in the Central Committee May Resolution.

Here, we immediately, like in all work of the Party, hit upon a problem decisive for good agit-prop work—the question of agit-prop cadres. The practice hitherto, we all know, has been that comrades placed on agit-prop work were usually those comrades that were not fit for other "more important work". As soon as a comrade showed some "understanding" of "problems generally", spoke smoothly, read some of our literature, he was at once shoved into "agit-prop work". General mass experience, general Party experience, was not the problem in choosing the forces for agit-prop work. This must be drastically changed. People doing agit-prop work in the Districts, Sections, and units must be people who have an understanding of the basic teachings of Marxism-Leninism, *people who have had ample general experience in mass work of the Party. Only such people will be able to carry out the Party line in this field of work.*

The problem of well organized, proper functioning agit-prop departments and of closer ties between the agit-prop and org. departments also becomes of great importance when we speak of making agit-prop work an integral part of our entire Party work. The problems of agit-prop work, schools, etc., are most closely bound up with our organizational problems. Confusion of the tasks of these departments or artificial division in this respect, is most harmful for the entire work of the Party. The main tasks of our agit-prop work and schools is carrying on mass agitation and propaganda, training the people for this work, preparing leaders for all the struggles which our Party is carrying on and with which it is faced. The placing of forces trained by our schools in the proper positions for work is of key importance. It is necessary to know the qualifications of each comrade at work, to follow up and assist his further development, to advance him in the process of activity to higher leading work, etc. Specialization, of which Lenin so often spoke—placing every person in the kind of work for which he is best suited—is a great need of our Party. All these problems are both political and organizational. They concern both the agit-prop and org. departments. Bolshevik division of tasks and closest cooperation between the org. and agit-prop departments is, therefore, most necessary.

Before concretely discussing some problems of our schools, we

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must discuss another vital problem, fundamental to good school work.

WORKERS BEST FIT FOR THE STUDY OF MARXISM-LENINISM

In the struggle against Marxism, the revisionists and the reformists of every shade have used as one of their "arguments" the "fact" that Marxism "cannot be understood by the workers". They said that workers cannot understand *Das Kapital* (they have preferred to use the original German title instead of the English translation, *Capital*, in order to make it appear more "mysterious" and complicated), that it can only be understood by the "educated", the "intellectuals". This was one of their "tricks" to keep the workers from studying their own literature, from coming under proletarian ideology, and accepting Marxism as their own theory.

Marxism-Leninism is a science and as such is not "easy as pie" to learn. This science, however, being built and based upon an examination of the capitalist mode of production and distribution, upon the conditions of the toiling masses and their struggles to free themselves from capitalist exploitation, can be best studied and understood by the workers. In addition to much persistence, effort, and interest, what is necessary is *class interests* to learn, understand, and make use of this science. At the basis of Marxism-Leninism lies the revolutionary proletarian class struggle. Because of the class interests and experiences of the worker, which become *a class instinct*, the worker has a greater *material base* than has the intellectual, for the study of Marxism-Leninism.

We could bring numerous examples to prove how "average workers" without "the necessary tools" (elementary education), in studying our theory together with intellectuals, have made greater progress in the study of Marxism-Leninism than the intellectuals. This is because of the advantage the worker has over the intellectual for this study—the greater *material base*. What was "pure theory" to the intellectual, what was to him a matter of "speculation" and guess-work, was to the worker an examination of actual events which fully corresponded to his own experiences in life and the class struggle. This is what gave the worker the advantage over the intellectual, notwithstanding the latter's formal education.

We do not mean to imply that the intellectuals are unable to study and understand Marxism-Leninism, or that *every worker* can learn *all about* Marxism-Leninism in a short time. Not at all. When an intellectual coming into the movement really leaves his bourgeois baggage behind, becomes part of the working class, makes the Party and the class struggles carried on by it the center of his life, he can surely learn Marxism-Leninism and become very useful

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for the Party. His formal education then becomes of great assistance in the study of Marxism-Leninism. On the other hand, if a worker will rely only on his *class instinct* and not apply himself, he will surely not learn the meaning of Marxism-Leninism and will not become useful for the Party. Both the worker and the intellectual can study and learn Marxism-Leninism by intensively applying themselves, by fully participating in the everyday work of the Party. But the advantage of the worker in the study of our theory must not be forgotten in order to guard against the lies of the bourgeoisie and reformists that "workers can't learn". In order to stimulate the study of Marxism-Leninism among the workers, not only must we convince the Party workers that it is imperative for them to know and to be fully versed in the Marxist-Leninist teachings, but we must, through planned assistance, encourage them in this study. We must convince them that it is possible, beyond any doubt, through active work and study, for them to master our theory.

FOR A BOLSHEVIK SCHOOL SYSTEM

With the onslaught of the bourgeoisie threatening the legal existence of every working class organization, especially of our Party, corps of Party workers armed with Marxism-Leninism, able to carry on work independently, are most imperative. To be able to produce forces for such independent work means that our schools must work in a real Leninist manner. We will attempt to explain this more fully.

National, district, and section periodic training schools, as already stated, are our chief medium for training our membership, especially the leading cadres (district, section, and unit) in our revolutionary theory. The question of *organization* of these schools, of selection of cadres for them, of preparation of outlines, of *what* and *how* to teach, are practical problems for us to tackle. Our studies must be linked up with the problems of the Party, the situation in the country, and with the study of the two world systems.

The teacher must know the possibilities of the students, just how much a student is able to absorb in a limited school term. Our outlines for study and the literature assigned must therefore be carefully measured to fit in with the knowledge of the student and with the time allotted for the school term. But the most important thing in this respect is *not to underestimate the possibilities of the worker—Party member, students*—to study and master, not only the particular portion of Marxism-Leninism that was assigned for the given school term, but the continuation of still further study after school is over, in connection with their Party work. Moreover, we must do

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all in our power to help the worker Party member to develop himself through higher education and work to become a "Communist intellectual"—what Lenin calls a Communist theoretician. Lenin says:

> "The *sin* [Lenin's emphasis] we commit is that we do not sufficiently 'stimulate' the workers to take this path . . . of professional revolutionary *training, and that we too frequently drag them back by our silly speeches about what 'can be understood' by the masses of the workers, by the 'average workers'*, etc" (p. 206—our emphasis).

Speaking further about higher political development of worker-cadres, professional revolutionaries, Lenin says:

> "And in order that working men *may be able to do this more often* [become Communist theoreticians—E.R.], efforts must be made to raise the level of the consciousness of the workers generally; care must be taken that the workers do not confine themselves to the artificially restricted limits of *literature for workers*, but that they study *general literature* to an increasing degree. [Lenin's emphasis.] It would even be more true to say 'were not confined', instead of 'not confine themselves', because *the workers themselves wish to read and do read all that is written for the intellegentsia and it is only a few (bad) intellectuals who believe that it is sufficient 'for the workers' to tell them a few things about factory conditions*, and to repeat over and over again what has long been known" (p. 123—our emphasis).

The following from Lenin will be very illuminating to us in this respect. Lenin was speaking for the workers against the economists who tried "to drag the workers back":

> "We want to know everything that everybody else knows, we want to learn the details of *all* aspects of political life and to take part *actively* in every political event. In order that we may do this, the intellectuals must talk to us less on what we already know, and tell us more about what we do not know and what we can never learn from our factory and 'economic' experience, that is, you must give us political knowledge" (pp. 153-54—Lenin's emphasis).

Lenin scoffs at the underestimation of the ability of the worker to understand theory and higher political education. Again and again he calls to our attention that if we lack forces, it is only because "we lack the ability to husband that which requires to be so carefully tended in order that it may grow" (p. 205). But he warns against babying the workers, against "talking down" to workers. "Talk [to the workers] about serious things in a serious manner" (p. 204) he warns us. The workers want to know and can learn. Only we have to help them and teach them and avoid the "*sin* of dragging the worker back".

A most serious attitude in regard to the worker Party member student, the fullest confidence in his ability to study and master the

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basic teachings of Marxism-Leninism and the greater assistance *to each individual student*, are other most important prerequisites for the proper teaching of theory in our schools. Any tendency to underestimate the ability of our worker Party member students to master our basic studies, to limit and "simplify" to the most meager minimum these studies is tantamount to "vulgarization . . . lowering ourselves to the most backward masses", against which Lenin fought most bitterly.

In summary we should like to stress some points regarding organization of schools, touched upon above.

1. *The well-planned preparation of schools is most important.* The first thing we must do is to place in charge of the school a comrade who is not only a good teacher but also a good organizer; a comrade who is capable of working with each individual student in such a way as to help the development of his political, organizational and personal make-up, to become the force the Party so urgently needs.

Our schools are of a limited study period. We cannot, therefore, expect that in this limited period our comrades should become "full-fledged Marxists". What we can do is to open the way for the comrades to study, giving them the basic principles of our theory and practice, the sources of material and the ability to study independently. The next thing we can do—and most of our schools are doing it, but must do even more—is to begin the general process of *Bolshevization* of those comrades attending our schools. We must develop a Bolshevik approach to Party life and work, an ability to work with other comrades—that is, collective and individual responsibility. In a word, we must develop from the worker students thorough *revolutionaries, Bolsheviks.*

In concluding the historic speech to the graduating Red Army commanders, from which we have quoted at the beginning of this article, Comrade Stalin points out that:

> "School is only a preparatory stage. Cadres receive their real steeling in actual work, outside school, in fighting difficulties."

And more specifically, speaking about the kind of cadres we are in need of:

> "Remember, comrades, that only those cadres are any good who do not fear difficulties, who do not hide from difficulties, but who, on the contrary, go out to meet difficulties, in order to overcome them and eliminate them. It is only in combating difficulties that real cadres are forged."

These words of Comrade Stalin must become the guiding line in our work of developing cadres. Our school must produce such

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cadres of which Comrade Stalin speaks. This is the main task of our schools.

That is why the placing of a comrade in charge of the school who will be capable of fulfilling these important tasks is of great importance.

2. *The selection of the proper students for our schools* is one of the cardinal factors determining the character, the progress, and the results of the school. The Agit-prop Commission of the Central Committee in its document on the last Central Committee Plenum stressed this point; and it cannot be too much emphasized. If the selection of the students is properly conducted, the school will be good. If this is not the case, in spite of having a proper comrade in charge of the school, in spite of good teachers, etc., the school will be a bad one, and will not bring the necessary results.

We have already, at the beginning of this article, discussed the kind of cadres our Party is in need of. The selection of the proper student body, therefore, to enable the schools to provide the Party with the needed cadres, is of the highest importance. This means that basic industrial workers, native-born workers, workers active in mass work, in trade unions, in shop work, in mass organizations, and Party functionaries, must make up the large part of our student body. Negro comrades, women workers, because of the importance of the work, must comprise a good portion of the student body. The comrades to be selected as students should have some general political knowledge.

3. *The problem of teachers* is facing us most sharply. Here we are extremely poor. Training of comrades for this work, as was pointed out in the document of the Central Committee Agit-prop Commission at the May Plenum, is most important. However, there is another problem involved here, namely, the proper utilization of the forces we have.

Many leading comrades can be teachers. There are others, also active leading comrades, who, with a little help can become teachers. It is true that these comrades are overburdened with other important work and cannot always find the time for teaching. But this is not the main reason that these comrades coming out to our schools are merely "contributors" and "lecturers", but not teachers. The main reason for this is that we "do not expect" these comrades to be teachers. This must be changed. Practice in some of our schools has shown that when these comrades came to "contribute", to "lecture" (as is the usual case), they have, with a little help actually *taught*, and were good teachers at that. So what is necessary here, also, is proper preparation and organization. Prior to the beginning of the school it is necessary that the comrade who is to take charge

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of the school and the agit-prop director meet with the comrades who are to teach and discuss not only *what* to teach—the subject matter —but *how* to teach—the methods of study and work at school, helping the comrades in the working out of outlines, reading material, etc.

All our teachers must be active Party workers, those who know the Party problems and are able to link these up with the studies. Otherwise our studies will be abstract and disconnected from life, and will not bring the necessary results. Therefore, these leading comrades are very important for our schools. But we must have them as *good* teachers. With good preparation and assistance they can become good teachers. Once these comrades realize that the schools are the best place for them really to get to know the cadres of the Party and to prepare these cadres, the leading comrades will make time to teach in our schools, and will include teaching as a very important part of their Party work as a whole.

* * *

These are some of the immediate problems in connection with our agit-prop and school work. There are many other problems. Many of those discussed here need more elaboration. This should be done in further articles in *The Communist*, the *Party Organizer*, and the *Daily Worker*. But what is needed, above all, as in other phases of Party activity, is to put our general line into practice. The last plenum of the Central Committee has given the general line on agit-prop and school work. It remains for us to put it into practice.

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The Rural Masses and the Work of Our Party

By DONALD HENDERSON

(*Speech Delivered at the Meeting of the Central Committee, C.P.U.S.A., May 25-27, 1935*)

ON THE BASIS of the *Open Letter*, during the past two years our Party has been successful in developing policies and organization which are rapidly achieving a successful turn to mass revolutionary work and influence in the cities and among the industrial urban proletariat. We cannot record the same progress and growth in mass influence among the rural sections of the American population. In an editorial in the *New York Times* on May 1, the capitalist press noted this fact with cheers:

> "Socialists and Communists will parade today in the larger cities, but few smaller communities will witness their demonstrations. The Marxian movement in this country remains especially what it always has been: a hothouse product of the metropolitan areas."

This failure to achieve more success in the rural regions of the United States is in part due, of course, to the greater necessity for our Party to concentrate on the basic industrial urban proletariat, and to the greater practical difficulties in reaching the workers and the semi-proletariat in the small villages and towns. The main difficulty, however, is political; while we can record some successes in our work among the farmers, the Party has not yet achieved a concrete and clear understanding of the class forces present in the rural regions of the United States, has failed to work out correct policies and methods of work among the masses in the countryside and in the small towns, and as a result has failed to take advantage of its opportunities. We have generally underestimated the importance of winning the rural proletariat to the revolutionary way out, and of organizing the poor farmers as the allies of the proletarian revolution.

It is necessary to realize that this problem is a problem which faces every District of the Party. Contrary to the prevailing habits of thought and practices of most of the Districts and Sections, neither rural industry nor rural agriculture is confined to a few so-called agrarian Districts of the Party. The main industrial Districts of

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Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, New York, New Haven, Detroit, Cleveland, and Chicago are particularly faced with these problems of rural work.

At the present time, continual neglect by the Party of work among the rural and semi-rural masses in the United States can only be disastrous for the successful carrying out of our major revolutionary policies. The extremely high development of capitalist agriculture in the United States resulted in the present crisis having acute effects on rural industry and agriculture. The Roosevelt policies of the N.R.A., the A.A.A., and the Federal Relief policies especially, have intensified the problems facing these rural masses. Revolutionary work has not only become more possible but also more necessary.

The rapid fascization going on in the United States finds fertile ground throughout rural America. Everywhere fascism attempts to find part of its mass base among the rural elements. In Germany the successful work of Hitler among the small town rural workers and farmers rallied these masses to the support of his demagogic policies and promises. At the present time, in the United States the main support for the various fascist "shirt" organizations comes from the rural sections. It is further clear that the successful development of our Labor Party policy, both in combating the danger of Farmer-Laborism and in winning the rural proletariat and semi-proletariat to a support of a correct Labor Party policy, requires that the whole Party more energetically carry on revolutionary work among these rural masses.

In the United States, according to the Census of 1930, 26 per cent of our population actually live on farms, and 52 per cent live in small cities, towns and villages of 10,000 or less population. This 78 per cent constitute the masses in the rural sections of the United States to which the Party must pay more attention. The remaining 22 per cent are concentrated in the larger cities of over 10,000 population.

It is largely among this 22 per cent in the cities that the work of the Party has been most intensively carried on, where it has made its influence felt, and where at the present time District and Section forces of our Party and the vast majority of our membership are located. While the winning of the basic urban industrial workers is the decisive task of the Party, we cannot successfully carry through our slogans of Soviet Power, of struggle against fascism, of building a Labor Party, unless we correct this neglect and underestimation of the importance of work among the rural and semi-rural masses located in the small cities, towns and villages, and on the farms.

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HIGH DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM IN THE RURAL SECTIONS

In Lenin's thesis on the agrarian question, adopted at the Second Congress of the Communist International, the basic line for work among the agricultural and rural masses was concisely given. This still remains an essential document for guiding the work of our Party. In this thesis Lenin pointed out the main class groups which constitute the agrarian population in capitalist countries:

> "In the first place, the agricultural proletariat, the hired laborers (working by the year, by the day, by the job) making their living by wage labor in capitalist (agricultural or industrial) enterprise; the independent organization of this class, separated from the other groups of the country population (in a political, military, trade, cooperative, educational sense), and an energetic propaganda among it, in order to win it over to the side of the Soviet Power and of the dictatorship of the proletariat, must be a fundamental task of the Communist Parties of all countries.
>
> "In the second place, the semi-proletariat or subsistence farmers, those who make their living partly by working for wages in agricultural and industrial capitalist establishments and partly by toiling on their own or a rented parcel of land yielding but a part of the necessary food produce for their families; this class of the rural population is rather numerous in all capitalist countries. . . .
>
> "In the third place, the little proprietors, the small farmers who possess by right of ownership or on rent small portions of land which satisfy the needs of their family and of their farming without requiring any additional wage labor. . . .
>
> "Fourth, the 'middle peasantry', in the economic sense, consists of small landowners who possess, according to the right of ownership or rent, portions of land, which although small, nevertheless may: (1) usually yield under capitalist rule, not only scanty provision for the family and the needs of the farming, but also the possibility of accumulating a certain surplus, which, at least in the best years, could be transformed into capital; and (2) necessitate the employment of (for instance in a family of two or three members) wage labor. . . .
>
> "Fifth, the landed peasants or farmers (who) are capitalists in agriculture, managing their lands usually with several hired laborers. . . . They are connected with the 'peasantry' only by their rather low standard of culture, their way of living, the personal manual work of their land. . . .
>
> "Sixth . . . the landowners and big landowners, that is, all those who systematically employ wage labor, directly or through their tenants, who exploit all small (and not infrequently also the middle) farmers in their neighborhood, and who do not do any actual manual work. . . ."

What is the rural class situation in the United States, especially with reference to the proletarian and semi-proletarian elements? In this connection we must take into consideration certain features

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of American capitalism which are of basic importance for our problem. Not only has the high development of finance capitalism in industry and agriculture in the United States increased the importance of the rural masses for the revolutionary movement, but, of more immediate importance, it has contributed certain concrete historical forms and class relations to our present rural situation.

In the first place, a much larger proportion of the population in the small villages and towns is directly connected with rural industry. While concentration of industry in the larger industrial centers has proceeded further in the United States than in most capitalist countries, this movement has also been accompanied by the development of industry throughout rural regions. South Jersey, while recognized as an intensive agricultural area, is at the same time a heavier clothing center than New York City. The main base of membership of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union on the Atlantic coast is in this area. In addition, nearly every small town in South Jersey has a glass, or munition factory, etc. Connecticut, while presenting the highest ratio of agricultural workers to farmers of any state in the United States (60 agricultural workers to every 40 farmers), is at the same time recognized by the Party as an industrial concentration area (metal, textile, machinery, munitions, etc.). Suffolk and Nassau counties on Long Island, while predominantly agricultural, contain large numbers of building trades workers. The textile industry as a whole, because of cheap labor supply, raw materials, power sources, etc., has always been located principally in the small towns and villages throughout southern New Hampshire, Massachusetts, North and South Carolina. The extensive development of railroads, bus lines, and other means of transportation throughout the United States, and the high development of communication facilities, roads, etc., have further contributed to the growth of an industrial rural proletariat. Even in states such as Kansas, Nebraska, and North and South Dakota, there has grown up a town and village proletariat composed of building trade workers, railroad workers, construction material workers, etc., and an infinite variety of light industry and service workers, such as gasoline station workers. The significant point here is that this high development of industry throughout the rural regions in the small towns and villages has become the basis for a large class of industrial workers having problems of wages, hours, living conditions and unemployment, in most cases even worse than the urban industrial workers.

In the second place, the processing of agricultural products and the preparation and manufacture locally of instruments of production for farming has been carried to a very high degree. 95 per

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cent of the canning industry is located in the small towns and villages, near the source of supply. The same is true of the packing of agricultural products, of beet sugar refineries, of dairy product processing, of slaughter houses, flour mills, etc. The fabrication and manufacturing of many products used in agriculture, such as fertilizer, feed, seed, basket and box, some farm machinery and much construction material, are carried on in the small towns. As a result of this, a semi-industrial proletariat, directly connected with the surrounding agricultural economy is to be found in the small towns and rural sections. In large part, their problems of wages and employment are tied to the developments in agriculture and the conditions facing agriculture in the surrounding area.

In the third place, and of more importance for our purposes here, agriculture itself has reached a higher stage of capitalist development here than in any other country. This has resulted, in so far as this question of class forces is concerned, in three important developments: an extremely large agricultural proletariat, a highly differentiated "capitalist" farming class, and the presence of a special class in the countryside—the rural business class. This last is due partly to rural industry, but more importantly to agriculture.

With approximately 6,000,000 farmers in the country, we have an agricultural proletariat of nearly 3,000,000. These figures in reality underestimate the ratio of agricultural wage labor to commercial farmers. On the one hand, of the 6,000,000 farmers, between one million and a half and two million are subsistence farmers who no longer make their living on their land, but work for wages on other farms and in local industries and trades. Furthermore, the sharecroppers and tenant farmers of the South are also included among this figure for farmers, although many of them are more strictly to be classed as semi-proletarians overlapping with the agricultural workers. On the other hand, the census figure for agricultural workers does not indicate the peak season employment of agricultural labor, and fails to register the large number of laborers who leave the cities during the summer to seek employment in the surrounding countryside. Furthermore, the children and wives of many farmers make up a substantial part of the agricultural working class, but are usually not so listed in the census.

The main sources of supply for agricultural workers are the small towns and villages of the locality, and the subsistence farmers. Partly as a result of the high degree of mechanization in agriculture, and partly as a result of the increased supply of unemployed labor from the towns and from subsistence farm families, a much smaller portion of the agricultural proletariat is migratory than formerly. Even during the working season the common practice in most areas

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is to return to the town at night. With the exception of Southern California, Southwestern Arizona, and a few minor places, the old system of extensive migration from crop to crop and from state to state is no longer common. On the other hand, the opposite custom, where the "hired hand" lives and eats with the family, and is regarded as one of the family, is no longer a common practice, except among the larger dairy farmers, and to some extent among the extensive types of farming found in the Dakotas and Nebraska. In most areas, the agricultural workers as a whole also engage in local industrial and semi-industrial work during off-season months. As a class they are faced with constant seasonal unemployment, and to an increasing degree within the last five years, with permanent unemployment.

A further result of the high development of capitalism in agriculture proper is the concentration of intensive types of farming around the larger cities, and consequently a concentration there of the agricultural proletariat. Within a radius of forty miles of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh are to be found 41 per cent of the agricultural workers in Pennsylvania, and 62 per cent of all food processing workers; within a radius of forty miles of New York City are to be found 27 per cent of the agricultural workers of New York State, and 80 per cent of all food processing workers; and within a radius of forty miles of Chicago are to be found 14 per cent of the agricultural workers of Illinois, and 76 per cent of all food processing workers. The nearby city market is, of course, responsible for this high degree of concentration of the various types of intensive agriculture (truck, potatoes, greenhouse, and various types of cold frame farming).

In relation to the farmers themselves, this high degree of capitalist penetration of agriculture proper has had certain results which we should note here for our purposes. Historically, outside of the South, agriculture in this country developed primarily on the basis of entrepreneur homestead farms. The characteristic American farm, big or little, is the family farm, with the owner and his family living on the farm, not in the village. This is particularly true of the extensive types of farming. A high degree of dependence upon commercial markets, locally, nationally, and internationally, upon credit and financial facilities, and upon cash income or credit to meet necessary production and living expenses are characteristic of the American farmer. This indicates one aspect of the penetration and domination of American agriculture by finance capital. The effect of the world crisis showed earlier in American agriculture than in American industry, and the consequent collapse of agriculture contributed to the collapse of industry in 1929 precisely because of

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the close integration of capitalist agriculture and capitalist industry; the crisis in agriculture was in turn intensified by this collapse of industry and finance.

The effects of the crisis, substantially furthered by the Roosevelt policies of the A.A.A., have speeded up the class differentiation going on among the farmers, resulting in the development at the bottom of the scale of a large and rapidly growing group of dispossessed farmers who have joined the ranks of the working class. More important, and larger in number, is the mass of part-time subsistence farmers, owning or renting small plots of land, but unable to make a living from their land. In Connecticut, for example, according to a survey made in the summer of 1934, over 60 per cent of the 30,000 farms belong in the category of part-time subsistence farms. In this case, all of these farm families earn more of their living at wage work away from the farm than they do on the farm. It has been conservatively estimated that probably 2,000,000 of the 6,000,000 farmers in the United States are now in this subsistence, semi-proletarian class. This group in reality form the semi-proletarian group in the countryside. According to a statement made by a leading Department of Agriculture official, seven-eighths of the commercial farming in the United States is carried on by approximately 50 per cent of the farmers. On the basis of studies made in several states by the C.W.A., one peculiarity of these part-time farmers should be noted: part of them are small farmers who have been pushed out of commercial farming by the competition of large farmers and corporations, and part of them are industrial and semi-industrial workers who, especially within the past five years, have taken up farming as a means of supplementing their income from industrial work.

Finally, we must take into account the existence of a special class in the countryside, the rural business class. This class developed as a result of the growth of the rural industry on the one hand, and the extremely high development of capitalism in agriculture on the other. It has been further increased by the characteristic American separation of the farmer from the small town and village. This group in relation to agriculture is composed of the small town financial interests and bankers, insurance interests, farm machinery agents, real estate companies, business elements connected with marketing of farm produce, and connected with the local processing of agricultural products.

This class represents the direct exploiters of the farmers, as the local agents of finance capitalism. This class of businessmen concretely expresses in the countryside and the towns generally the meaning and the relations of capitalism in relation to agriculture. They

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are, so to speak, the local personifications of the network of capitalist agricultural relations. Supplemented by the business interests representing rural industry and semi-industry connected with the processing of agricultural products, this class represents not only the direct exploiters of the farmers as a whole, but also everywhere establishes an alliance with the rich farmers as opposed to the masses of poor farmers and workers. It represents the effective agents and mobilizing forces of big business and finance capital in its attacks on small farmers, agricultural workers and the rural proletariat. Concentrated in the towns and dominating the towns, this class invariably plays a leading role in all maneuvers and attacks against the struggles for organization of the rural proletariat and the small farmers.

THE CHARACTER AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SMALL TOWN AND VILLAGE

As a result of the foregoing characteristics of agriculture which arise from the high development of finance capitalism in agriculture and rural industry, the village, town, and small city in America play an exceptionally important role. Here is located the rural business class which as agents of finance capital are the immediate exploiters of the surrounding agrarian economy and the connecting link between outside finance capital and the local farm community. This class controls and dominates the town press, pulpit, political apparatus, education, etc. Partly because of its consolidation in the towns, it is usually the main force which mobilizes the town and countryside against all types of workers' and small farmers' struggles. It should also be remembered that good roads, well developed means of communication, and control over the press enable this class with its alliance with the big farmers to move quickly and efficiently. Its members are usually well educated and in no sense provincial in so far as the performance of their functions is concerned.

The town also assumes importance as the main marketing center of the surrounding agrarian economy, and is the center in which are located the various types of processing plants for agricultural products. Equally important, these towns, villages, and small cities are the main purchasing centers for farm machinery, feed, seed, construction materials, and the necessities of life for the farmers and their families. These towns are in fact the economic focal points of the surrounding agricultural economy. Their class composition and character are largely determined by the productive activities of the surrounding countryside.

In addition to the rural business classes, these towns are usually the headquarters for the local farmers' organizations and the main

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meeting places of such organizations. Finally, it is in these towns and villages that the majority of the rural working class (the industrial, semi-industrial, and the agricultural workers) as well as the white-collar workers and service employees are to be found. This group under the conditions of the crisis has constantly been augmented by dispossessed farmers and growing numbers of unemployed.

It would seem that these towns and villages and small cities play a central role culturally, educationally, and politically in the American countryside. At the same time, they present our best opportunity for the development of a proletarian revolutionary base in the countryside and for initiating successful work among the surrounding poor and middle farmers.

The importance of these towns and villages, ranging from 100 to 10,000 population, scattered throughout the countryside, must be realized by our Party. On the one hand, our Party has concentrated in the large industrial cities, and without exception our Section and District headquarters are located in such places. On the other hand, our Party has ranged the countryside working to develop a mass revolutionary movement among the poor and middle farmers. The strategic significance, both politically and organizationally, of the small town has been overlooked to a large extent. In these towns we find the agricultural workers, we find a large number of unemployed workers, even during the peak of the season; here are located the white-collar class which supply the labor force for small town business. These towns are usually the center of the economic, political, cultural and educational life of the farmer. Generally the town, especially the county seat, is the place where the farmers meet. This is where he comes to market and to purchase. This is where he is most easily mobilized in time of struggle against the workers, and here, on the other hand, is where the business class mobilizes, even to the extent of mobilizing sections of the town workers for vigilante bands, etc. While dominated and controlled by the business class, the vast majority of class forces in these small towns are proletariat and semi-proletariat. Even a portion of the small town business class itself, because of its direct dependence on the purchasing power of the town working class and because of inner conflicts within this class, can be won for various types of support for the workers and small farmers.

HOW CAN WE PENETRATE AND WIN THE RURAL MASSES

It is clear from the foregoing analysis that there exists in the American countryside a rural proletariat and semi-proletariat of

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unusually large proportions. Composed of rural industrial workers, of agricultural workers, of white-collar workers supplemented by a growing mass of dispossessed farmers, this group provides at once the necessasy basis for the development of a successful mass revolutionary movement in the countryside, and at the same time, due to their concentration in the towns and the strategic role of the towns in the countryside generally, this class is the one which offers us our greatest immediate opportunities for practical work.

The industrial workers in the towns (such as textile, clothing, building trades, railroad, construction, etc.) have in many cases already achieved some degree of organization, and it is precisely with these groups that the Party has established many connections, contacts and even Party members. The semi-industrial workers, those connected with the innumerable plants engaged in the processing of agricultural products and the manufacturing of those instruments used in agriculture (canneries, packing-houses, cheese, dairy processing plants, flour, feed, seed, slaughter houses, basket and box factories, etc.) are likewise more often organized and present many opportunities for immediate work. Up until the present time, however, the Party has generally failed to utilize these contacts and Party members among these rural industrial workers as initiating forces for reaching the other types of rural workers, and for reaching the surrounding subsistence and poor farmers.

The agricultural workers especially present the Party with a strategic group from the point of view of developing class consciousness generally in the countryside. Even in those areas and sections where numerically they are not a predominant majority, in their relations to the other classes, particularly to the town business class, the poor and subsistence farmers and the rich farmers, they present our best opportunity for developing the class struggle in the countryside. This is because the struggles of these agricultural workers strike at the whole set of economic and political relations in the surrounding countryside. They strike at the profits of the rich farmers, and endanger the exploiting possibilities of the local business classes in relation to all farmers. Their struggles for improved wages and working conditions necessarily affect and involve the unemployed because of the close identity of these two groups. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, these struggles of the agricultural workers present us with the necessity and the greatest opportunities for concretely educating the small and middle farmers on all these questions involving their alliance with the working class as opposed to the rich farmers and business elements and for involving them in united actions.

Special importance attaches to the unemployed, whether indus-

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trial and agricultural workers, or former farmers. Partly because of the diverse composition of the unemployed which includes all these groups of workers and subsistence farmers, and partly because it is precisely from these who are unemployed during the off season months that the majority of the workers in agriculture and seasonal industry are recruited that these groups very often can be utilized for initiating struggle and organization among the various types of employed workers. At the present time the most common form of organization in these villages and towns in the countryside is an unemployed organization, and it is with these workers that we have our closest and most numerous contacts and Party members today. While the general unemployed campaigns and struggles should be carried on among these workers, it is necessary that the Party should also recognize the difference between unemployed organizations in the small towns and unemployed organizations in large cities from the point of view of their composition, their possible role in the small town, and their relatively greater political importance. In many towns, especially in the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, etc., these unemployed organization very often are capable even now of exercising control over the policies of the town. The close organic relationship between the wages and working conditions of the employed and the relief conditions and policies of the unemployed make united front action between these two groups of decisive importance. This is made still more necessary by the fact that both are administered by representatives of the local business class and the rich farmers' organizations.

Based on these two groups of industrial and agricultural workers, the possibility and necessity of simultaneously developing mass work among the semi-proletariat, the subsistence and part-time farmers, is greatly increased. Many of the conditions and immediate demands of this group are common to the rural industrial and agricultural proletariat, such as wages, adequate relief, relief rates on local projects, etc. At the same time this group represents from the point of view of developing our work among the poor and middle farmers, a more stable base in class terms than farmers, and a practical opportunity for welding the united front of poor and middle farmers with the agricultural and industrial proletariat. Having both sets of problems (problems connected with their character as workers and problems as very poor farmers whose numbers are constantly increasing), they represent a particularly important section of the rural population.

A word should be said about the importance and possibility of work among the smaller and poorer business and professional elements in the towns. Practical experience (particularly in South

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Jersey) has shown that sections of the town business class (shopkeepers, gasoline station owners, etc.) can be won over, or at least neutralized in the local struggles. It should be remembered that in the small towns, the local civic, fraternal, church and political organizations have a very mixed class composition, usually including all elements from workers to big business men. American Legion Posts in these smaller towns, villages and cities, include all elements. Local political clubs and civic organizations are frequently of this mixed character. The ability to prevent the mobilization of these organizations against the struggles of the workers and poor farmers depends on a broad united front policy and united front educational work. In New Jersey, both American Legion Posts and the K.K.K. organizations were neutralized in such a fashion through attention to local small business men and working class elements who were members of these organizations. This section of the small town professional and business class can also be utilized, if properly approached, and proper utilization made of conflicts within the ranks of the business classes, for collection of funds, protest petitions, etc.

The developing of a flexible united front policy between the various class groups, employed and unemployed, workers and farmers, is even more important in our work in the small towns and surrounding countryside than in the cities. All of the struggles that have occurred in the rural regions clearly show that the close integration of class forces existing alongside of especially sharp conflicts in these regions results in a very rapid mobilization and lining up of all elements. While it may be possible successfully to organize and carry through struggles in a large city in a single shop or factory without direct participation by the remaining sections of the population, such a situation is usually impossible in these small towns and villages. The greater dominance over the press, over the pulpit, and the local political machine by the business class and the rich farmers in these towns, makes it doubly necessary that all these favorable class forces be educated and mobilized through proper united front policies in back of each given struggle.

SOME MAJOR WEAKNESSES OF OUR PARTY'S WORK AMONG THE RURAL MASSES

While this report has not attempted to deal at all with the work of the Party in relation to the farmers as a whole, it is necessary to note certain weaknesses of work among the farmers growing out of the neglect of the rural and semi-rural proletariat. There exists a widespread attitude by the District and Section leading comrades particularly that rural work and the winning of the rural masses

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is merely work among the farmers, and responsibility for such work should be given to farmer comrades. Lenin, in his thesis adopted at the Second Congress of the Communist International, points out that "three groups taken together constitute the majority of the agrarian population in all capitalist countries": the agricultural proletariat, the subsistence farmers, and the small farmers who satisfy the needs of their family and their farming without requiring any additional wage labor. If we take into account in the United States the large mass of industrial workers in the rural regions we see clearly that the majority of the rural masses in most regions are not commercial farmers. More important, while basing ourselves on the urban laboring masses, it is only by well directed organization and struggle among the rural and semi-rural proletariat that successful revolutionary work among the poor farmers and practical neutralization of the middle farmer can be accomplished.

While recognizing the basic political role and necessary development of the rural proletariat in relation to the farm movement, this does not mean that we mechanically must proceed in developing organization and struggles from city to town, to village, to farmer. In many areas successful organization and struggle on the basis of local conditions and our contacts will undoubtedly start among the farmers, and in fact has already done so. However, in order to maintain such organization on a correct political line, and to prevent organizational collapse and political vacillations among these petty bourgeois elements, the Party fractions and leading comrades must in such cases immediately strive to secure a more proletarian base in these regions. Both in the Northwestern States and in Eastern Pennsylvania and Connecticut, one of the important reasons for our failure to develop our favorable beginnings among the farmers into permanent organization and broadening struggle has been the failure by the Party comrades in these areas to develop the movement in the towns and among the proletarian and semi-proletarian elements.

A further weakness which is directly related to our neglect of the rural and semi-rural proletariat in the towns and villages centers around two closely related problems: the problem of developing a correct class differentiation between the masses of poor and small farmers as opposed to the rich farmers; and, on the other hand, the related problem of developing unity between the rural and urban workers with the masses of poor farmers. While delegations of workers from the larger cities to meetings of farmers in the countryside, and vice versa, are important expressions of solidarity, these alone will never weld the united front between the allies of the working class and the proletarian movement. What is essential is the practi-

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cal carrying through of united front supporting actions between workers in the rural towns and villages and the poor farmers during the heat of class conflict and struggle.

The actual participation of local farmers in demonstrations and in supplying food to striking textile workers in Connecticut, and the holding of mass demonstrations by local small farmers in support of the Seabrook agricultural workers' strike, right on the Seabrook farm, are two good examples of what must be done.

At the present time, two major policies of our Party particularly require special attention with reference to our work among these rural masses: the fight against war and fascism, and the development of our Labor Party policy. Theoretically, the major political fallacy of Farmer-Laborism is its failure to recognize the basic class role of the proletariat, its failure to recognize the special class role of the masses of poor farmers *as allies of the proletariat*, and consequently its failure to differentiate between the various strata of farmers. The various agrarian movements which have arisen during the past fifty years, especially from the Middle West and the Northwest, have been of this Farmer-Labor character. They have never been based upon, and in most cases have never taken account of, the class significance and role of the proletariat as the leading class in solving their problems; they have been reformist, not revolutionary. The extremely difficult task of overcoming the widespread Farmer-Labor illusions and of developing in practice the leadership of the working class throughout the rural regions centers in part around our ability to penetrate more effectively the rural and semi-rural proletarian masses. Furthermore, the necessity of securing active support for our Labor Party policy merely from the point of view of establishing broader support, in rural areas as well as urban, of being able to develop local Labor Party tickets, etc., is of decisive importance to our whole Labor Party policy.

Finally, as we pointed out at the beginning of this report, the question of fascism assumes special importance in the rural regions. It has been frequently noted that it is precisely in the rural regions and among the rural masses that the most flagrant and vicious forms of violations of civil liberties, of vigilanteism, and of demagogic fascist proposals have been most widespread and have taken deepest roots. Almost without exception, struggles in the rural regions have rapidly developed to the stage of organized and systematic terror and violence. The basis of this rapid development of semi-fascist forms is to be found in the class composition of the small towns and surrounding countryside. The extreme dominance of the small town business and rich farmer class over all phases of life in the small towns has also contributed to these semi-fascist developments. At

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the same time, the experiences of the farmers and the agricultural workers during the last war, in actively resisting conscription and other phases of war activity, more than other groups in the United States, and the large delegations of representatives from the rural sections of the country at the Anti-War Congress clearly indicate the mass possibilities of developing anti-war and anti-fascist work in these areas. The petty bourgeois character of the masses of farmers and the experiences of the Party in Germany should warn us of the real danger which we face in the rapid fascization going on in the countryside. The immediate steps necessary to develop a broad anti-fascist and anti-war movement among these masses, however, are the successful development of struggle and organization around the immediate economic demands and problems of these farmers and of the rural proletariat.

ERRATUM

To correct a typographical error which appeared in Engels' "Introduction to Marx's *The Class Struggle in France*", published in the August issue, the sentence beginning on the last line of page 752 should read: "There was absolutely nothing to alter in the interpretation of events given in the earlier chapters, or in the causal connections established therein, as the continuance of the narrative from March 10, up to the autumn of 1850 in the review in question, proves."

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